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THE  
HONOURABLE MISS FERRA



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THE  
HON. MISS FERRARD.

BY THE  
AUTHOR OF "HOGAN, M.P."

"Only a learner,  
Quick one or slow one;  
Just a discerner,  
I would teach no one.  
I am earth's native:  
No rearranging it!  
I be creative,  
Chopping and changing it?"  
BROWNING.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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## THE HONOURABLE MISS FERRARD.



### CHAPTER I.

“ A pleasant ill is this disease of love,  
And 'twere not ill to sketch its likeness thus :  
When sharp cold spreads through all the æther  
clear,  
And children seize a crystal icicle,  
At first they firmly hold their new-found joy,  
But in the end the melting mass nor cares  
To slip away, nor is it good to keep ;  
So those that love, the selfsame strong desire  
Now leads to action, now to idleness.”

SOPHOCLES (*Fragments*).



HE bright sun of a sweet spring morning shone into the Mill-house, and through the two gable windows of Helena's room at the




top of the house, lighting up the dingy red hangings of King William's couch, and displaying in strong contrast the grey dust-wreaths that choked its every cranny. It was a queer room, and the bright light seemed to set out its incongruities with double intensity. In the corners of the ceiling were cobwebs of every stage of antiquity and thickness. Long threads, as if for convenience of telegraphic communication, joined the settlements of each angle to one another, while cables and hawsers, which in some places were so numerous and interlaced that they reminded one of the rigging of a ship, depended downwards, and served the families for that aërial exercise so pleasing to spiders. Nor were spiders the only specimens of animal life. The ivy which grew in rank luxuriance up the walls outside, and encircled the windows in a thick green training, furnished countless contributions of moths, and a goodly stock of the creatures classed under the

comprehensive heading of creeping things; sparrows and rats, sometimes, were as familiar in Helena's room as in their own quarters without. Despite the sun light which flooded the room and lit up every chink and cleft; despite the scented wind that poured unchecked through the wide gaping windows and out at the open door, bringing with it a message from the primrose banks and daffodils in the fields across the river—the room had a dreary, ugly, depressing look. And Helena, who was sitting in a low chair in the window from which the river was to be seen, with a book open in her lap, seemed to have caught for a moment the forlorn desolate expression of everything. Her arms were raised, and her head rested on the hands which were clasped behind it. Her eyes were straying far out over the landscape; but as they were full of tears, it is doubtful whether she saw any of the brightness or light there.

Helena's eyes saw only a winter landscape, passed away now four months ago. Tobergeen was white with snow, and Madam Really's cottage looked as black as a crow's nest above a huge drift. The Galtees were crowned with a cold diadem that flashed and trembled before her eyes. The river-path to Darraghmore had seven feet of snow-water on it, and Isi and she had scrambled along the dangerous high-road where the bramble and hedge-tops alone warned them from the gulleys where they would have sunk and smothered had they fallen. That was before Clan went, and Clan had been beating and bullying her and Isi (by way of farewell, possibly, for after that day they never saw him again) ; and they had run away out to Jim Devereux, their friend, for shelter and protection, at least until night.

Hel remembered that day well. The warm, half-dark kitchen, where Jim was



by himself nursing a sickly calf by the fire. Isi ran off with the dog after a hare, and Hel came in alone and sat down. He made her tell him the whole story. She could see his face redden and his eyes flash with anger; then he came over and seated himself beside her on the bench, and wiped away the tears that were running down her cheeks; she could almost feel the gentle touch of his strong hand and the sweet breath that stirred her dishevelled hair. They said nothing for a long time. Then he leaned forward a little, and looking straight and close into her face, said in a very low trembling voice :

“Hel, unless you give me the right to interfere with Clan, I oughtn’t to. You understand me, dear?”


“Yes.”

“And—and—you do then?”

Hel did not answer at all, but the two faces came somehow nearer and nearer—neither knowing exactly how or why, and

they kissed each other once. Then Devereux sat still beside her, both without speaking or needing to speak. How warm it was—the great fire glowed and blazed, and lighted up the hams that festooned the ceiling, and the languid brown eyes of the sick calf stretched on a soft fragrant heap of hay. It looked up at Jim, Hel thought, as if it knew and loved him too. So they sat for a while; the ticking of the great old clock seemed as loud as a church bell in Helena's ears, and the whole place seemed for a moment transformed. Then Isi rushed in pell-mell with Rusty, who was yelping and leaping at the dead hare on his master's shoulder.

It was as if only yesterday—the snowy footprints on the floor that so soon melted into black wet streaks—the bright flame of the fire shining in the wistful eyes of the little calf. Now it was far into April, Easter had come and gone, and it was mild



and warm. The trees were fast putting on their summer garb. The fields were dotted with the yellow waving tassels of the cowslip, and the grass was a deeper green and longer. Helena saw none of the rich promise of the summer : the long undulating reaches of pasture, where the lambs were sporting in the sunshine; the river winding by, shining as clear and joyous as the blue cloudless heaven that looked down upon it. She lay still, only clasping her fingers till the knuckles whitened, her mouth tight shut, yet quivering, and the colour coming and going in her cheeks, as of one in mortal terror.


“They’ll do it !” she wailed aloud. “They will take him from me ! Oh, what shall I do ?” Then the great violet eyes, full already, overflowed, and ran down her cheeks, and a deep quick sob shook her chest. But a step made itself heard on the creaking stair without—a deliberate heavy tread, accompanied by asthmatic

groans. Helena with a spring like a cat was over to a basin of water, and was dipping her face in it, and splashing industriously, when Cawth entered.

“I’ll mek yer bed the noo, Hel. Ay, ay”—she seemed to be taking up the thread of some previously dropped discussion, as she began pulling the bed-gear about—“Mary Devereux’s weddin’ ’ull settle our freen’ Jim too; an’ he may just as weel marry as not. Twal’ hundred pound! my certy, auld Tom Devereux wu’n’t let that gae by, and nayther will Father Quaide. He’ll hae his bite out o’t; and he’s richt if the fules will let him. Ah! Father Quaide is just set up on this match too.”

“Who told *you* that?” demanded Helena imperiously, as she turned round a composed face, eying Cawth boldly.

“Hech! must ye hae chapter an’ verse eh? Speer at anybody in th’ town. I gat it fra’ a crony of Jim’s mither’s—Mrs. Carmody; ’twas she tell’t me too Mrs.




FitzFfoulkes was dead. Ay, an' what think ye o' this? Madam Really—that quare divel!—stopped her powney last nicht, and went in to tell the news t' auld Judy Delaney. She's bothered, ye ken, and 'twas in the dark; so sez madam to the dochter, 'Tell yer mither fra' me her guid freen' Mrs. FitzFfoulkes is dead.' The dochter went over and bawled it into the auld one's ear, sittin' at the fire. 'Ayah!' sez she, 'dead, is she? Then she's blazin' in hell be this!' Madam by the door heard every word, and off wid her straight. I'll warran' Judy'll come short o' her tay an' wine noo, though Davy seen madam gae up the hill laffin' fit to be tied. Augh! she's a quare one!"

But Cawth, busy inside the great curtains, did not see that she was talking to the empty air. Helena had seized her hat from its nail, and was down in Isi's room, bidding him get ready to go out.

A few moments saw the pair climbing



down the garden-wall—for Helena of late had chosen that unobserved mode of egress—the sheltered river-path, rough and wet as it usually was, had at least the charm of utter privacy, and she was not compelled to pass the windows of the Perrys, who would be pretty sure to pounce out upon her, or perhaps intrude their unwelcome company upon her for as long a portion of her walk as their laziness would allow. Once, indeed, she and Isidor had played them a trick. The three grown-up ones had pushed themselves on the young Ferrards, and, out of pure idle inquisitiveness and love of excitement, insisted on going with them on a shooting expedition. Helena and Isi planned a piece of mischief, and with much talk of herons' feathers, wild ducks' plumage, and such gay spoils, led the trio a ten-mile tramp through bog and mud, and finally sent them home tired, wet and dirty, and cheated. A long coolness ensued after this prank, and might



have lasted for ever so far as Helena was concerned ; but the unstable Perrys came creeping back, and Hel—solitary, proud Hel—consented to endure them again.

“Come away up to Darraghmore,” said Helena, as soon as she found herself standing on the soft river bank below the wall. “I’d like to get a word with Jim to-day.”

“To-day ! Then you won’t. He’s to go to Limerick about things for the wedding. Didn’t you know ?”

“I did not,” she replied mournfully ; and she stood still a moment, as if uncertain whether to go on or not.

What was the use of going if he were away ? But to stay indoors with the weight that was crushing her seemed utterly impossible. The only rest from that would be in action ; for it seemed as if something was gnawing and biting at her heart, and when she sat still, as she had done since breakfast-time, when

Cawth brought in the news, she thought she should choke.

“Let us go, anyhow,” said she in a despairing tone. “We’ll go to Rosslyne woods.”


“What if Satterthwaite finds us?”

“No matter. I don’t mind him; he’s a good fellow, Isi, I think.”

“Yes,” answered Isi, cheerfully acquiescent; “we won’t mind taking any of his rabbits then.”

Helena did not reply. She had other and weightier matters than these fine courtesies to think of; and they set out on their journey in silence, as usual.

Isi and the dog found plenty of occupation and matter of observation as they went. It was the third week of April, and even the bleak country round Daraghstown had submitted to the spell of the enchanter Spring. The meadow-grass was springing up tall and green; the hideous brown stalks of last year’s mullein and wild




tanzy were gone, and the red flowers of the early clover took their place. Everything was pushing and elbowing out into life, and it seemed, if you shut your eyes for a moment, as if you must see a change directly you re-opened them. The fruit-trees in Madam Really's orchard crowned the hill as with a pink and white snow-wreath. The hedges smelled sweetly of the primroses and the tender resinous odour of the young shoots ; tall, thin fern-fronds uncurled themselves and stretched up into the sunlight from beneath the brambles, in whose thickest recesses the nests of the thrushes and blackbirds were yet perilously visible. There had been a fleeting shower in the forenoon, and on every dock-leaf hung a jewel, and the ditches were nearly overflowing. The moss by the river-side was swollen like a sponge with the moisture, which ran out of it as the foot pressed it ; and on the least provocation the willows and birches let

fall a shower-bath of diamonds. Yet the sun was drying up everything fast. The stones along the river-path were white and dry, though they lay in little lakes of clear rain-water ; and the crows, busy among the newly-sprouted fields of potatoes, waded deliberately in soft mud.

Helena and Isidor had clearly no objections to the mud and water, which to anybody else would have been an insuperable drawback to the river-path. Isi tramped through the dirtiest places, heedless of the stones, which Hel, with skirts tucked up, leaped on one after another.

The Darragh was fuller and darker of hue than usual—cinnamon-colour almost, between its natural bog-tint and the clay washed down by the rain. Here and there, when dammed by stones and *débris*, the foam and bubbles had collected in great white bells, that contrasted strangely in relief with the dark stream hurrying by.

“There’s where we got the otter ; look,



Hel!" said the boy, throwing a stone across at a rank tuft of weeds on the opposite bank—"a splendid skin; Char says he will get perhaps fifteen shillings for it."

Hel only cast a careless glance at the weed-tuft. Two yellow wagtails flew out, trembling, and perched not far off in the shadow of an ivy-grown boulder. The creatures looked like little living sunbeams, palpitating and watching. Isidor, a veritable *frondeur*, stooped for another stone. Rusty, who was at his heels, watched the act with an uninterested air, as of one despising such trivialities. The sunbeams flew apart, and the stone rebounded off the rock and startled an old water-rat, who was taking his pleasure on a fallen tree-stump, into the stream. The little black speck soon vanished into the shelter of its hole. Isi waited a few minutes, but the water-rat did not reappear, and he followed his sister, who,

preoccupied and listless, had got considerably in advance.

"You mightn't splash me so," said she petulantly. He was walking heavily in huge boots through the mud beside her.

"Very well," replied he obediently, taking the other side of the path—if, indeed, it deserved that name; in reality it was only a sheep-walk—and they went on for a while without speaking.

Isi and the dog found endless matter for observation. Now it was a nest with a callow brood, that opened their mouths and chirped hungrily at the rustle of the branches disturbed by the travellers; or it was a corncrake, so near that he could almost put his hand on it; or three larks up at once singing in sweet concert in the clouds. Now and again a bird would dart shrieking from the bramble hedges beside them, the wild terror of the poor thing betraying her treasure. Helena never turned her head. All the exclamations of

Isi, or Rusty's short, sympathising yelps, left her unmoved and unheeding.

They had crossed a little bridge at the boundary of the demesne now. Darraghmore lay about a mile to the right across the pastures. The old house was rain-soaked and more desolate-looking than ever; the sunshine seemed to have overlooked the dead-grey walls, and the empty windows gave it a drear, weird look. It was a blot on the bright spring landscape. Helena seated herself on an uprooted tree-stem, and turning to her brother, said :

“ Go up to the house; if he is not there, perhaps he has left a message. But don't let Biddy know I am here.”

She remained brooding beside the river, to wait the return of her messenger. Isi set off with long strides through the meadow grass; Helena watched his diminishing figure with heavy anxious eyes.



“He won’t be there, I know. Oh God! what am I to do? how am I to bear it?” Then tears came again to poor wild Hel’s relief, and she sobbed and cried bitterly. Rusty, who had elected to remain with her, came and laid his sympathising brown head in her lap, but she pushed him aside, and he, finding his overtures unwelcome, went and lay down at a distance, looking at her now and again in troubled wonder. Presently she looked up and saw Isi running fast through the fields back to her.

“Could—no—if Jim were there he would come himself. But why is Isi running so fast? He has a message certainly.”

She sat still watching him, and when he came near enough for her to see his face, she jumped up, and went to meet him.

He had a message, an envelope addressed to himself, and enclosing a folded sheet for her.

Her fingers trembled, so that she could hardly hold it, and her eyes were dimmed

with tears, but the round clear writing was plain enough. Helena with a beating heart read the following :

“ MY DEAR HELENA,

“ I have to go to Limerick this morning early, about things for Mary’s wedding—so I can’t be at home till the day after to-morrow. You are invited to the wedding by my mother ; Mary made her for my asking—so come. And it will give me pleasure to see you in our house, where I hope you will one day be altogether.” (It seemed to Hel that she had not breathed that day until she read this sentence,) “ Don’t mind anything you hear, and bid Isi look to Freney for me. My dear Helena, with love, yours ever,

“ J. DEVEREUX.”

“ What does he say ? What makes you squeeze it all up that way ? Hel, eh, Hel ?”

“ You’re to feed Freney ; go away, Isi,

and look after him ; Jim says I'm to tell you—go."

Helena spoke slowly and distinctly, staring at him with eyes that to Isi seemed double their size.

" Biddy has the key of the corn-bin, and I suppose she'll have fed him. Am I to go back then—now ?"

" Yes, and then go out by the entrance-gate, and meet me on the high-road."

He turned without a word and retraced his steps, and Helena sat down in the grass to smooth out the letter, which in the first paroxysm of delight she had pressed in her grasp till it was a shapeless crumpled rag. She read it and re-read it slowly, tracing every word with her forefinger, and drawing deep breaths at every interval, then she folded it up carefully and hid it in her dress. Helena had a different face when she looked up, every trace of tears was gone, and the great blue eyes seemed to mirror the new lights

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and shadows they saw in the day. She pulled a head of red clover that was growing beside her, and, plucking out the little florets one by one, bit off the end, and sucked the honey out of the long pale tubelet; it was an old childish habit, and she did it in a mechanical, dreamy way, without knowing or caring why. Presently the dismembered head of the clover dropped in her lap, and she jumped up, looking about her eagerly. Rusty got up also, and stared at her as if waiting for orders; Hel caught his amber eyes fixed on hers. "Come here, old boy," said she, remembering her past crossness to him.

He jumped upon her, trying to lick her face, and pawing and whimpering with delight. "The falling out of faithful friends renewal is of love;" and Hel stooped her smooth pale cheek, and let the brute kiss it by way of atonement. Presently she thought of Isi, and turned to look for him. He was standing at the

corner of the house watching for her. She waved her handkerchief, and he walked away in the direction she had commanded ; then she and the dog set off together by the river bank, and at a point farther down crossed a dam and got up the bank, and on to the Ballycormack Road. Here in about an hour's time Isi joined her. They did not take the Rosslyne approach, but passed it by, and after half an hour's walking found a broken paling which gave them admission at once to the woods.

“ If Rusty isn't to course those things, we'd better keep hold of him, Hel,” said Isi ; and he took a leash out of his pocket, and slipping it round the neck of the dog held him tight.

Helena never answered ; she was walking on in front, her eyes dilated and her lips parted—drinking in the beauty and softness of the day in a sort of ecstasy. The new leaves of the chestnuts were spreading their soft pale fingers to the sun, and their

sheaths were dropping every now and then to the ground beside her, where they shone and glistened beside the tufts of long-stalked wide-flowered primroses growing in wild profusion in the half-dark of the thickets.


Wood anemones were springing, and wild hyacinths were pushing up their little green clusters ; dog violets with white etiolated leaves clustered in the shadow of the trunks, and the ferns slowly unrolled their curled hairy fronds. Pink catkins hung yet on the pine branches here and there among tiny hard green cones, and a fresh aromatic air distilled itself from the young growth all round.

Presently they reached an open place where the surface seemed curiously broken and uneven, and the grass was as short and close as if sheep had eaten it down.

“Stand back a minute, Hel, and you’ll see them ; do, it’s worth while,” whispered Isi, pulling her back as he spoke. She obeyed, and they remained leaning against

a larch tree, and watching ; Rusty advanced his head too, and, with his ears cocked, watched intently. Presently a little faint ripple seemed to pass over the face of the open ground—pop-pop ! one head, then another, then all the long ears appeared, and at last out came their owners boldly, big and little, tawny, pale grey, of every shade up to black, and with cautious frightened looks from their soft brown eyes the rabbits began their capers. Some sat up gravely and demurely, but in the majority of instances the white tails were oftener higher than their ears, as they frolicked over the grass. Helena stood watching them, careful not to stir, and holding one of the dog's ears in her hand—a signal he well understood.

Crack, crack ! and then immediately another crack, crack ! four barrels while one could breathe. Helena leaped with fright, and the dog yelped and strained at the leash when he saw Satterthwaite, having



fired both his guns, advance to pick up the dead. He gave the *coup de grce* with the stock of his gun to a couple of kicking bunnys, which had only been peppered and frightened too badly to get back, and collecting the creatures in a good handful by the hind-legs, advanced to meet her.

“How do you do, Miss Ferrard?” said he, holding out his free hand ; he had left the guns to a boy on the other side. “I am glad to see you out in this direction. You spoilt my sport nicely that time you came up first.”

“Yes,” said Isi ; “I saw them just coming out, and we waited to look at them.”

Satterthwaite glanced ever so slightly at the dog, and a trace of a smile lurked under his moustache.

“Come round to the foot of the slope, and we’ll maybe get some more there. I have a field of spring wheat behind, and they are playing the mischief with it.”



“You should have a ferret and nets, that’s how Jim Devereux does,” said Isi, looking greedily at the two splendid breech-loaders the stable-boy was carrying.

“Take you one of them,” said Satterthwaite; “and here, George, carry in those rabbits, and give me the other.” The exchange was effected, and they crossed the now deserted feeding grass, and entered the wood again at the other side. “How is Lord Darraghmore?” said Satterthwaite, speaking directly to Helena. He was carrying his gun under his arm, and had fallen back a little, so that he could look at her as she spoke.

Helena looked at him too with a mixture of shy wonder and approbation. The Englishman had on a grey shooting-suit that fitted perfectly yet easily to his broad shoulders, and showed his clean-cut athletic limbs.


What a contrast between him and Isi in his rough dirty coat, with his black

elf-locks and lean, brown face, the chief feature of which was his wild-looking eyes, that were keen as a hawk's, but gentle at the same time. The Englishman, with his clean-shaved wholesome face, fresh linen, and general look of self-respecting, well-cared *bien aise*, physically and morally, was a new revelation to Helena. How different from Perry, with his unshorn chin and rusty old clothes, or Doctor Cartan, whose dirty smartness was still more objectionable. Jim Devereux was always well dressed and cleanly, but then Satterthwaite was English, and that made a difference. Jim was one of themselves, only much the best of them. Then Helena began to think of Jim, and felt stealthily for her letter. Merely to touch it with her fingers made her laugh for joy.

"Take care," said Satterthwaite, catching a branch which rebounded after Isi brushed carelessly against it, and holding it till she was safe past.

She looked up and thanked him with a glance. His cap, of grey stuff like his shooting-suit, had fallen backwards on his head; the flickering sun-rays that came and went among the branches shone in his blue eyes, and lit up the changing tints of his auburn hair. He kept near her, a little in advance, and shielded her from the overhanging branches that threatened to bar their way. He got well scratched in the process, but he seemed not to mind. He might have come off better had he not been so occupied with his companion. Helena was looking radiantly lovely. Her great eyes glowed and flashed under the shadow of her hat, and when a branch caught or pulled it off, leaving bare her rich tangled locks, and showing the low white forehead that the slouched hat so jealously hid, she laughed out with glee, till he asked himself in wonder, could this be the same sulky gipsy he had seen that night at the Perrys?

Then they reached the field at the foot



of the slope. Satterthwaite gave Isi his powder-horn and flask, and sent him to the other side to lie *perdu* there till the little people should appear. Helena sat down on a felled tree-stump behind a thicket of brambles, and Satterthwaite, who had just loaded his gun, seated himself at the far end on a fork. He remained quiet a moment, looking at her, and pulling his moustache thoughtfully. Some crackle as of footsteps made itself heard suddenly.

“Hark!” said Satterthwaite, jumping up, “there is some one in the wood; I hear steps! George! is it you, George?” he shouted aloud, and ran up the slope into the labyrinth of tree-stems. After a fruitless search he returned.

“I heard a foot, I know; who can it be?”

They remained still listening, but no further sound broke the stillness. After a long pause he turned to her.

“Do you shoot?” he asked.

“No,” answered Helena, with a flush

and a startled look ; “ I’ve helped with the ferrets, though, sometimes.” This was said with a tone as if making some confession, and her eyes drooped with a pained look.

He pretended not to see it, but said rather hurriedly :

“ My friends Miss Seton and Mrs. Trelawney, of Malcombe Abbey, shoot. You know it’s the fashion now in England for ladies to shoot. They have guns made specially for them, I assure you, and they almost always go out to see the men at work.”


He felt that she was looking at him, but he kept his eyes steadfastly away from hers.

“ I don’t like it now,” answered Helena simply. “ I used to, though.”

“ What do you like best—walking or riding ?”

“ I love riding ; but I think I like best of all, after that, reading.”

He almost started, then he dipped in his pocket and fetched out a little thick book—



a pocket "Shakespeare"—in beautifully clear diamond type, and handed it to her.

She opened it. Use had almost obliterated the name on the back.

"Yes, we have that; but it's a great big, old, torn one."

Hel did not think it necessary to tell him that the greater portion had been used to manufacture gun-wads by the discriminating Clanrickarde.

"Which of the plays do you prefer?"

"I can't understand them," answered Hel candidly. "That one about the fairies I liked best. You know they say we have fairies here. That was a fort up where the rabbits are, and over there in the middle of that field is another. I don't believe in it, you know," she added.

"You don't believe in them, I am sure," said Satterthwaite. "That fort won't be long there; I am going to have it ploughed next autumn."

“Oh, don’t do that! Something will happen to you; the good people will be revenged in some terrible way.”

The earnestness of her tone made him laugh.

“Ah, indeed! What will they do?— She doesn’t believe in them and she’s afraid of them,” thought he with an inward laugh. “Well, there are plenty such unbelievers in the world.”

“Take away the butter from the cows, or send distemper or trouble. It’s considered very dangerous——”

“The Irish fairies are more malignant than Shakespeare’s, then.”

“Dirty Davy’s brother ploughed up a fairy hill one day, and,” Helena went on in an impressive tone, “the horse fell dead when he had finished the last furrow.”

“Humph! see, there are our friends. Wait till I get a bead drawn on some of those big fellows. St!——”

Then again the reports from both sides

of the field rang through the air and echoed with a rattle among the trees.

"Four," said Satterthwaite, laying the creatures beside the log. "Your brother is a good shot, Miss Ferrard."

"Yes," replied Hel in an exulting tone ; "he can hit a swallow on the wing."

"I wish he'd come up here and help me to keep down these plagues. There! I've had enough of them for to-day," and, as he spoke, he laid the gun against the log and settled himself lazily and comfortably, leaning on one elbow at a little distance from her.

"What in the world has come to her?" thought he. "She positively looks happy, and is almost talkative—almost, for it is clearly an unusual burst. What a perfect child it is!—You like the country?" he said aloud, catching the backward sweep of her eyes, which she had turned heavenwards to search for a lark, whose sweet song reached them, dropping in broken snatches from the white edge of a tiny cloud.



“Yes,” she replied dreamily.

“You would like to live in the country always?”

She answered him with a look only.

“To live here always? Well, not here—near it though?”

“Near it—near here?” The words sank in her strangely, and she turned and looked at him with suspicion in her eyes, and something of terror too. Satterthwaite’s met hers, and a hot burning flush spread over her cheeks and forehead. Involuntarily she felt for her letter: could it have fallen and betrayed her? No, it was safe. Then her mood changed, and a look of distrust and reserve took the place of the calm, hopeful brightness. She turned half away petulantly, then got up as if to go.

“Don’t go, pray—are you tired?” he said, jumping up too. He repented his all too successful *ruse* now, and was as displeased with its result as she was.

“You must come to the house—do. I’ll

whistle to your brother across there to follow us."

"I don't think we can," she said moodily.  
"There is your book—take it, please."

"Well, come round this way, and I can let you out at the gates. It will save you going back through the woods."

He took the book as he spoke and put it back in his pocket, then he shouldered the gun and, taking up the rabbits, walked on as if nothing further was needed. Helena, half unwillingly, had nothing to do but follow. Isi joined them at the other side of the field, round which ran a wooded walk, and ten minutes' walking through a plantation brought them to the pleasure-ground at the west side of Rosslyne. Helena cast a look at the summer-house facing the pond, which had been cleaned out and deepened, as she passed. Satterthwaite looked straight before him, as if he saw nothing or remembered nothing. The slope had been laid out in terraces, and was planted with orna-

mental shrubs and spring-flowers. A quantity of hyacinths sent up a heavy sweet smell, and little pink hepaticas and rich, dark wall-flowers were ranged in rows beside the walks.

"How do you like it?" said Satterthwaite. He had noticed her astonished look at everything, from the fine, many-coloured gravel underfoot and the velvet-like grass edges to the sloping banks, up to the walls of the house.

"I—I like it," she replied hesitatingly.

They soon reached the hall door; but no inducement that he could offer would make her enter. Nevertheless, though she refused persistently, it was almost against her own inclination. She took stealthy, longing looks at the coloured awnings and the bright, perfumed flowers, and, past these, at the gilt picture-frames, with here and there a glimpse of rows of well-bound books shining in the half-dark of the shaded rooms. Vague reminiscences of the house in Bath rose in her mind. Yet this was

very different ; there was restraint, and oppressiveness, and solitude ; but here Satterthwaite seemed the incarnation of good-humour and careless sociability. Helena had never yet seen a disapproving look on his face ; and it seemed almost incredible to her that wealth and refinement could be so pleasantly connected with the tastes and pleasures that had gone hand-in-hand with necessity and degradation in her case. He was so good-natured too—nearly as good-natured as Jim, Helena thought. Then it occurred to her that Jim might not like her to talk so freely to a stranger, and she felt as if she had done wrong in suffering herself to admire and almost covet Satterthwaite's luxuries.

“ I wanted to show you some books,” he said ; “ and if you would choose some that you would care to read, I could then have them sent down to you. I have a quantity—do come in and look at them.”

“ No—thank you. No—Isi, come.”

"Take this one—you can send it back by your brother. I don't want it, I assure you," and Satterthwaite held out the tiny Shakespeare.

Hel's eyes looked longingly enough at it, but she hesitated. There was something so frank and reassuring in his manner; there was not the slightest appearance of a desire either to bestow a favour or condescension; neither was there, what is just as offensive, any effort at seeming equal, or less than equal, on his side. Satterthwaite knew with whom he had to deal, and his own clear and manly sense of what was exactly due to them and to himself prompted his words and manner.

"I—I—" then she held out her hand, and took the little volume with a smile.

"Stay, Mr. Ferrard. Your half of the rabbits — you must not forget them. Jerry!" shouted Satterthwaite, "bring out those rabbits."

"I don't want them," said Isi sulkily,



putting his hands in his pockets and frowning; his eyes, however, sought Helena's inquiringly.

"Nonsense! what am I to do with them? You killed half a dozen, anyhow; so here;" and Satterthwaite sorted out of the heap of grey things the boy had thrown down before them a fair share. Isi in reality had killed eight out of the fourteen. Helena turned away; and left to himself he took the bunch Satterthwaite handed him obediently.

"Now, come up again soon. I must get the ferrets to work at them one of these days. Devereux will lend me his, he says, and you must come up and bear a hand. They eat out all my cabbages in one night. I never saw a place so overrun as it is. Tell me, when may I expect you?"

"We can't come on Thursday," replied the boy; "we have to go to Mary Devereux's wedding."

Helena standing near drew a deep sigh

as these words fell on her ear. Satterthwaite saw this, and watched her closely.

“Have you, indeed! I wish I were. These sort of weddings are great fun, I’m told.” He was a little astonished at the intelligence, for he thought the Ferrards would have kept themselves above the mere rustics of the place, as he judged the Devereux to be.

“We’re going because we know Jim so well,” said Isi, who was in a wonderfully confidential mood; “Hel and I. We never saw the others at all.”

This seemed stranger still to Satterthwaite; however, he presently had ample leisure to think the matter over, for they went away, and he went in to take his lunch alone.


The library, his favourite room, commanded a lovely view of the sloping garden, and through a vista, cleverly cut in an angle, of the distant Galtees. The windows were open, and the majolica

boxes of hyacinths on the sills perfumed the room, and almost drowned the cigar-smoke which its occupant was sending out in clouds. Lying back in a low smoking-chair, his long legs stretched in their lazy length, Satterthwaite went over in his own mind the events of the morning. "I wonder will they come back? The young fellow—how he eyed my gun! and can't he shoot too!—is likely to. And what a savage princess that is! believes in fairies, and has read 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' I think, however, that Hans Christian Andersen would suit her better than my Shakespeare. Shall I ever see that again, and when?" Then he laughed, and blew a long curl of grey mist away from him. "What a chance it was to come upon them there! How comes my young lady's temper to be so changed of late? She positively smiled half a dozen times this afternoon! I should like to know what is going on at Darraghmore, and what is that



fellow Devereux about? What a queer place it is! I never dreamed of having such neighbours."

He knocked his cigar-ash off on the edge of one of the majolica boxes, and reaching an unopened paper off the table began to read the English news. Two days' old telegrams and leading articles were not very exhilarating mental exercise, so the paper was soon dropped, and Mr. Satterthwaite yawned heartily. Then he mounted one leg over the arm of his smoking-chair, and for a brief space looked musingly into his garden. Somehow the pretty scene that had sprung into being for his wishing, at which he had worked and planned—for he was no mere theorist, but could put hand and foot to the spade with as good will as any son of Adam—seemed to have lost its charm for him. He felt bored and out of sympathy with it. The sun was shining, and he could see that the leaves were larger and the waxy green




spikelets of the chestnuts were taller than they had been in the morning, and the branch-tips of the laburnum showed a faint gold-yellow thread here and there. Still, the thing seemed stale. There was not the feeling or the freshness as before. He could not tell how or why. It was just that he was lonely ; perhaps for the first time in his life the self-contained Englishman missed something, or felt that there was something more needed in the well-filled cup of life poured out for him by Fate. He was a little puzzled at his own unwonted sensation. But he was not given to indulge in thinking about himself, and his mind reverted again to the early part of the day ; and he found himself before long recalling the time Helena's hat was swept off by the beech branch, and the way the sunlight seemed to mingle with the sudden smile that leaped to meet it in her face.

“ She's too lovely to be a mere farmer's

wife," said he, going out into the hall to take his hat, for it was time he was back to the planting going on behind the house. "And yet it would be a pity she should be anything else. I couldn't fancy that Pocahontas in London. Perhaps madam is right. I begin to believe she is. Eh, what's this?" His eye caught two cards on the hall-table. "The Reallys; sorry I was out. I'll go down and have another talk with that woman. Egad! she's worth the time."

Then he went off to the kitchen-garden by a walk at the back of the hay-yard, and coming unexpectedly on his gang of workers, found them all comfortably lying on their backs smoking and otherwise diverting themselves, which agreeable sight soon banished all Mr. Satterthwaite's little tendencies to ennui and boredom.





## CHAPTER II.

“N’ayant pas encore l’âge où l’on invente, je me contente de raconter.”—DUMAS.




OBERGEEN, or the Hill of the Geese, lay about four or so miles from Darraghstown. North of Rosslyne and to the north-west of Darraghmore, it formed a sheltering screen that stood between them and the Galtees, and the cold winds that chilled themselves in winter among their snow-clad peaks. It was not very elevated, nor was the path steep or rugged that led up to the high

plateau where lay the queer-shaped stones to which the country people's fancy had given the name of geese. All the way up stretched a rich chequer-work of emerald meadows and oat-fields where the green corn was waving in uneven drills, and broad acres of turnips and dark-leaved mangolds.

The farmhouse was one of those hideous Noah's ark erections of plastered limestone, with little mean windows and a bleak sloping roof of slates, that seem to be the sole possible conception of native provincial architecture. The farmyard lay before, behind, and beside the house, and the uneven weedy cobblestone pavement extended to the one step of the front door. A large range of farm-buildings and outhouses were built close to the end of the house, and the plentifully stocked farmyard gave ample token of the prosperity of its owners.


Too plentifully stocked altogether for the comfort of its inhabitants on such a day



as this. The pigs dashed about to escape the kicks and blows so plentifully bestowed by the women who were rushing to and fro excitedly in the complicated process of preparing the wedding feast. The turkeys had roosted on a sunny wall, and surveyed the scene with dignity from its eminence. The geese, hungry and greedy, invaded the whole territory at their disposal, and now and again with outstretched wings and vociferous gabble made a furious promenade up and down, striking with real or affected terror a band of urchins who were disporting themselves among the conveyances belonging to the wedding guests. The roof was white and blue with the pigeons which kept walking to and fro on the slates, keeping a jealous watch on the door all the while, every exit from which filled them with expectation. The midday feeding-time of the poultry had been forgotten ; the great copper in the cowhouse, which served to boil their mess of potatoes and Indian

meal, was at that moment the receptacle of two hams and as many chickens as would fit in it at the same time, all which were boiling under the supervision of an old woman who considered herself aggrieved inasmuch as her duties kept her away from the more attractive scene presented by the farmhouse kitchen, where the most important items of the *menu* were being cooked. Not only had every fire-place in the house been utilised for the occasion, but, in addition to the farmyard boiler, fires had been kindled as well in sheltered corners at the back of the house, and three-legged pots and oven pots steamed and rattled to the delight of the gossoons and hangers-on with whom the place was now swarming. The dinner-hour was fast approaching, and the bustle in the kitchen became more and more intense.

It was a large apartment occupying almost one half the ground-floor space of the house, and thronged with people, all



busy, and all talking and laughing and disputing. The whole fireplace was built up with a glowing wall of turf, before which on a horizontal spit roasted a piece of beef that looked like the entire side of an ox. A little red-headed boy acted as turnspit, and sat on a creepy stool as far withdrawn from the heat of the fire as was compatible with the strict discharge of his function ; a function indeed which there was little likelihood of his forgetting, for the roast, which was to be the *pièce de résistance* of the feast, was the cynosure of half the matrons in the place. Just at that moment, however, public attention was arrested by a dispute which had arisen between the dowager Mrs. Devereux, the bride's paternal grandmother, a sturdy old dame dressed in an ancient green satin gown, who seemed to have assumed the position of commander-in-chief in default of her daughter-in-law, and the professed cook who had been hired from Ballycormack for the occasion.



“A turkey into boiling water? augh! Go’bless us, woman! do ye think *I* never boiled a turkey in *my* life before?”

The pitch at which this challenge was proclaimed and the furious tone of it caused a momentary lull; the egg-beating, and pounding, and chopping, and grinding ceased all round, and every ear was strained for the battle.

“Divle cares,” retorted the professional, whose fiery eyes betokened the proverbial temper of her class. “I boiled turkeys for me Lord Gormandale and the very hoight of society, not makin’ little of you, ma’am,” she added with the most delicious condescension of tone, “and into boiling wather that baste must go this minute.”

As she spoke she advanced with outstretched hands to seize the cause of contention, which was lying in readiness on a dresser by the wall. Mrs. Devereux senior executed a flank movement, keeping her

face to the attacking party, and placed herself between her and the turkey.

“I’ll not allow it!” she proclaimed.  
“I’ve fed him and crammed him with my own two hands, and to go set that before the bishop. Martha! Martha!”

She felt that public opinion was on the side of the professed cook, and that her supremacy was trembling in the balance, so appealed to her daughter-in-law to reinforce her.

Jim’s mother, who was sitting apart near the window with her daughter’s trembling hand held fast in her own, only glanced deprecatingly at the veteran, and said gently:

“Give Julia her way, now, granny, do; I’ll go bail ’twill be equally as good.”

Julia, who indeed barely waited for the order, seized the turkey with the scornful remark that she had boiled turkeys for better than bishops in her day; and granny, deposed and discomfited, created a diversion

by cuffing the ears of a boy who, incited thereto by his compeers without, had dashed into the kitchen on a voyage of discovery.

The guests began to arrive, and Jim Devereux and his father were busy helping them to bestow themselves, some in the one sitting-room of the house where the dinner-table for the bishop, priests, and chief guests had been set, and some without in the entry, and before the door. A group remained standing in front of the house, mostly men; the chief figure among them was the bridegroom, a heavy but not ill-looking man of thirty; most of them had been drinking pretty heavily. Car after car drove up and deposited its burden at the door. Loud laughter and jest without warned those in the kitchen of the increasing numbers of guests, and their exertions were redoubled. Granny was ubiquitous, and invoked and threatened the bishop at every turn, producing a certain effect in all instances save that of the

professed cook, who in her turn appealed to her own deity Lord Gormandale, and that "better than a bishop," the Protestant Lord Primate from Dublin, for whom she swore that with her own two unaided hands she had cooked a dinner of four courses.

The seventeen-year-old bride sat with her mother, and received the greetings of the guests as they entered. Flushed and trembling, and crying now and again, she never raised her eyes, while the mother listened to the noisy congratulations of each batch of new-comers with a strange blending of gratitude and deprecation. Her girl had got the best match of the country-side; but she hardly dared to allow herself even to think so, much less to look or speak as if she were conscious of anything unusually fortunate or enviable, for fear of drawing down envy, or provoking calamity by exciting the dreaded evil eye—a timid, superstitious nature, that would forget to enjoy the glad warmth of a sum-

mer day while forecasting storm to come. Her husband, who was of a very different spirit, was standing at the door with some neighbours, talking and drinking. He was a lean, sinewy, well-made man, with a handsome but hard face. He was well pleased with his daughter's marriage, but out of respect for himself took a more independent tone in speaking of it.

"Ay, ay, FitzGerald," he said to a neighbour, "I have nothing to say—a clean, decent boy, and, between ourselves, they'll have enough to live upon."

"Why didn't you hold Mary over till Jim here was going off too? Father Quaide 'ud be content with the one fifty for the two jobs." Another neighbour asked this, winking as he spoke to FitzGerald.

"Jim's in no hurry," replied young Devereux with a frown, stepping out from the group and away down towards the lane, as if he saw a vehicle approaching that demanded his attention.

As he walked off, the old men turned their heads and looked after him admiringly.

. “Devereux,” said a stooped old man—a Galtee farmer, with keen grey eyes and thin lips, between which, as he spoke, appeared a set of dazzling white teeth—“what are you doing with that boy of yours? It’s time he had a wife. Why aren’t you looking after Mary Sheahan, of Ballytrophy. Twelve hundred down, and you could give him Darraghmore out and out.”

“He has Darraghmore out and out,” said their host dryly. “And as for Mary Sheahan, a purtier nor nicer little girl never stepped in the county.”

“Ay, so!” went on the Galtee farmer. “And, bedad! Tom Devereux, she won’t be long on hand, the same little girl. Thrust Father Quaide to have her settled before—ay, before Halloween. Money down, and most respectable!”

Jocularly as this was all said, there was an undercurrent of almost savage threatening running beneath. Devereux knew perfectly what they intended. The Galtee farmer, a cousin of the Sheahans, was their spokesman; and FitzGerald, a mountaineer, six feet six in his stockings, was an ally, and was treasuring every word that fell from Devereux.

“Oh! respectable is it?” said FitzGerald. “Faith, yes! Her mother was a Tuohill of Clare, an’ a cousin of the Burghos—and every one knows they’re next thing to the Knight himself—an’ the father is own brother to the parish priest of Ballyhas-town. I’m told some of the money will come from him.”

“Musha, then!” said old Devereux, in a tone of mingled bitterness and contempt—perhaps the recollection of Father Quaide’s sixty pounds oppressed him—“people think if they’re connected with a priest they’re mighty grand. *I* never could see anything about them, but that they earned

their money like other people, only a——sight easier !”

“ Ay, thrath !” assented willingly the facile FitzGerald, whose *rôle* it was to play and draw out Devereux. “ Sure, a priest will do anything for money !”

“ Ay,” added the Galtee farmer, “ barrin’ work for it !” And at this old stock joke they all laughed loudly.

However, this was mere by-play. FitzGerald returned to the charge, and, with a big, blustering voice, began :

“ Heth ! then meself wishes they’d not be in such a hurry entirely wid purty Mary, till I see would me own owld woman thrip up her heels and give me a chance. ’Tisn’t long I’d be till I’d be comin’ down the mountain to talk to her for meself.”

As FitzGerald finished his speech, he fixed his cunning grey eyes on Devereux, and so did the old man. They plainly expected a declaration, and Devereux felt



extremely puzzled how to give it. He was anxious for the match ; it was a suitable one in every way ; but of course he owed it to himself, and to his family and position, not to betray the slightest desire for, or appreciation of, the honour they were desirous to confer upon him. That would have been to "be-little" himself, and would, moreover, have been a purely gratuitous proceeding on his part. The real trouble was this : Jim had boldly declared he would not marry the girl ; and his father's concern now was to keep back this audacious and most disrespectful resolve from the ambassadors, and at the same time give them a broad hint, without absolutely committing himself in the affirmative or negative, or seeming anxious or even over-willing for the match, and that a little delay would be desirable. He hoped in time to overcome his son's objections, the real cause of which he was far from suspecting ; and he trusted to his

own and Father Quaide's influence to accomplish this. To get the negotiations postponed *sine die* was his sole thought. So he replied :

"'Tis no second-hand goods will do Mary Sheahan. No, no, Long Larry," he said, shaking his head. This was a compliment, and went for nothing with both parties. "I've me eye on a boy—I'll say no more ; but he's her ayquals in most things, and the rest I dare say wouldn't part the bargain. They might and they mightn't, however. Sure, what's the hurry ? There's no one wantin' to run away wid ayther of them."

This oracular speech seemed to close the discussion. The Galtee farmer, with a satisfied expression of face, lighted a pipe, and leaning his back against the wall of the house, amused himself counting the geese and turkeys, which, frantic with hunger and excitement, were making a terrible hubbub.

“I’ll go bail those creatures are forgotten,” said Devereux, glad of a diversion. Then he shouted, in a louder tone than was necessary: “Con, run to the loft—bring down a few sieves of meal; we’ll be all deafened if they don’t get something.”

The boy did as he was desired, and their clamour was appeased. The next thing was to drive the pigs into a field and latch the gate, so as to preserve the house from their intrusion when the dinner began.

Meantime Jim was walking slowly down the long and steep lane which connected the farmhouse of Tobergeen with the high-road at the foot of the hill. He passed the parish priest’s covered car containing his own august connection, the bishop, who with the owner of the vehicle completely filled it. Then came the Sheahans’ outside car. Miss Mary, sitting demurely beside her mother, replied with a pleased smile to the salutation of the young master of Darraghmore, and looked a little vexed

that he did not turn round to accompany her party to the house. Jim, who scarcely knew her, held his way downhill churlishly, and when he reached the bottom seated himself on the bank beside the gatepost to wait for the tardy Ferrards. Before long a white cloud of dust beneath the trees that overhung the Comerford wall showed that the expected mail-car was in sight, in a few minutes it stopped, and they got down. Isi seemed to have made no change in his apparel, but Hel looked transformed. She wore her black silk dress, which she had carefully preserved since it had been sent to her from Bath; a black bonnet which had only been worn once; and Cawth had produced out of her stores a valuable point-lace mantilla that had belonged to the first Lady Darraghmore, yellow with age and much ill-use, but still with an air of elegance and distinction that somehow suited Helena wonderfully. She looked at him with a smile as she gave him her

hand, but to her astonishment he took it silently and gravely ; and the trio ascended the rocky lane without speaking to each other. Jim walked close to Helena, a little behind her, and surveyed her changed appearance with a look that became each moment more melancholy and despairing. Helena utterly did not know what to think, but so full of confidence and pleased anticipation was she that she attached no serious meaning to her lover's manner. Simple and straightforward herself in all things, the idea that any complication could have arisen never occurred to her. When they reached the door and everybody had gone into the house, Jim turned and said to her :


“ I'll take you over to my mother and Mary—stay with them ; and after dinner, when the dancing begins in the barn, I wish you to go up the hill. I have something to say to you.”

Helena was struck by his severe tone, and the cold almost stern look he bent

upon her. She was about to speak, but he turned into the entry ; and she, feeling suddenly depressed and frightened, had no choice but to follow, and she found herself among a crowd of people, every one of whom immediately began staring at her and questioning each other with astonished eyes.

Helena sat down beside Mrs. Devereux, and in a perfectly composed manner replied to her salutation ; indeed, the timid-eyed matron felt far too much awe of her guest to bore her with much conversation, and the bride said not a word. Helena looked at her with wonder ; the purple silk dress, white veil, and heavy wreath of orange-blossoms, under which was a flushed, tear-stained child's face, filled her with astonishment and pity. Some of the women brought her cake and wine ; she did not refuse it, but the plate lay in her lap untouched.

Then the bishop entered the kitchen ;



the dinner was ready for him and the *élite* of the guests in the parlour. The cook and grannie had made up their dispute, and their feud was forgotten in face of the common necessity. A living dog is better for all purposes than a dead lion, and Lord Gormandale and the Protestant Primate faded into limbo before the advent of the Bishop of Peatshire. Immediately that his rubicund visage appeared at the door every one knelt down. The Ferrards and the little turnspit alone excepted. Even the servants, with their cooking utensils in their hands, tumbled down higgledy-piggledy; the episcopal benediction did not take long, and his lordship advanced to greet his goddaughter and cousin, the bride.

“ Mary, my dear child, so you leave Tobergeen to-day. Ah, well! Martha, don’t be crying now; she’s not going so far from you after all. Father Quaide, I wonder at your bad taste to be sending

all your pretty girls out of the parish that way, though you're not leaving my diocese, Mary."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Father Quaide, who had five filthy ten-pound notes in the pocket of his second-best velvet waistcoat, and felt in very good spirits, "your lordship has nothing to say in these matters at all."

"Take care, take care!" said the Bishop, shaking a warning though playful forefinger. "The Synod may play some of you a queer trick or two."

"Augh, then, my lord," said old Deve-reux in a bitter tone, "we're hearing of that this long time, and it doesn't seem to be coming off all the same."

This allusion of the Bishop's referred to a Synod which about this time had been convoked for the purpose of re-arranging some trivial matters of church discipline and custom, among them the practice of exacting a percentage on brides' fortunes as wedding-fees—the advisability of priests



holding farms, or playing cards, or the quantity of punch which might be legitimately drunk by parish priests and curates, and other small matters of no importance in a political or theological sense, but interesting nevertheless to the lay body at large.

Father Quaide and every one of the priests laughed heartily at Devereux, who indeed joined in the hilarity—though it was, in every sense, at his own cost.

The Bishop had by this caught sight of Helena, and as he moved in to dinner with Mrs. Devereux asked who she was.

“Ferrard ! Darraghmore. Eh, yes, to be sure. I can remember old Lord Darraghmore when I was curate here at Ballycormack ; he was on his last legs then, bailiffs in the house, and driving out in a carriage and four—eh, yes, to be sure.”

Then he took no further notice of Helena, who indeed was soon tired of the

festival, and wished in her heart she had not come. Old Devereux filled her a glass of champagne, and said ceremoniously he was proud to see her in his house. A farmer's wife, Mrs. Sheahan, her rival's mother, good-naturedly helped her to everything within reach. Jim avoided her, and turned away his face whenever she caught his eye, and Hel grew by degrees more miserable and uncomfortable. The loud talk and laughter at sayings and jokes which she could not understand—for Helena with her English blood had inherited a droll obtuseness to Irish humour—made her head ache; the rows of strange faces, the hot heavy atmosphere, all combined to make the place a sort of purgatory to her, and she eagerly watched for an opportunity to release herself. Presently her neighbour said :

“ I think, miss, if you'll excuse me, I'll go, for there are so many waiting to get their turn at this table, and I know what

it is to feed such a number. So by your leave, miss, I'll remove."

"I'll go too," said she gladly; "no, thank you, I could not take any more." She rose and followed the considerate Mrs. Sheahan, and their places were immediately filled. Helena was delighted to get out of the hot stifling room; she looked for Isi, but he, less fastidious than she, was enjoying his dinner at a corner of the table, sitting by Long Larry FitzGerald, who was telling him of the past glories of Darraghmore, as he remembered it when a boy. Helena tried vainly to catch his eye, but failed. In the kitchen, people were eating and drinking, and everywhere was a bustle of noise and confusion. She went outside and into the farmyard, where the air was fresher and cooler, though the guests were coming and going, and the smell of the kitchen pervaded the air. Every one seemed to stare at her, and there was not one whom she knew how to talk to, or

who was not afraid to talk to her. She wished Isi would come out, or Jim—what in the world could be the matter with him? Hel felt every moment more anxious and ill at ease. She watched the entry to see if he would pass by the open door. At last he came out, carrying a huge bundle of candles wherewith to light up the barn in which the dance was to be held. Helena was standing a little on one side amusing herself with a friendly sheep-dog. He did not see her, he was looking round for the servant boy. She heard him order Father Quaide's covered car to be brought round in ten minutes; the Bishop had to go to a mountain parish where he was to sleep that night. Then he went over to the great barn, and having disposed of the candles, came back leisurely. This time he could not help seeing her. He stared a little.

“Oh, you are there, Hel; I'll ask you to wait till the Bishop and Father Quaide

are gone—but, come into the house and sit down.”

His tone was constrained and distant. Helena, who hitherto had felt no serious uneasiness, turned suddenly cold, a nameless dumb terror took possession of her. What if, in spite of his letter, he was going to marry Mary Sheahan? could it be? No no, that was not to be thought of. She was scarcely able to reply audibly.

“I’ll go up the hill, Jim, and wait for you there; I’d rather.” Then, without another word, for there was a perilous tremble in her voice, she turned, and walking fast reached the end of the farm-buildings, and passing through a gate found herself on a narrow white path that wound past the corn-fields and meadows till it reached the summit of the hill.

It was nearly seven o’clock, and the twilight was falling slowly. The sun was sinking behind the Galtees in a golden flame, that yet shone in the little roof

windows of the farmhouse, while the road which lay far below was in shadow. There was a dew falling -thick and soft, and the grass was already damp. Great black slugs crept across the dusty path, leaving little silvery streaks on the stones. From the hedges below, the thrushes' nocturns came up to her clear and sweet, and she could hear a faint far-off echo of the fiddle summoning the dancers to the barn. Helena hastened on, glad to leave that sound at least behind her. At last the little path ended at a great white stone with a hollow in it, that formed a comfortable sloping seat. Hel threw herself into it with a sigh. Round about lay the stone geese, blocks of granite whitened by the weather, and standing out in curious relief against the dark green of the close-cropped herbage.

The valley of the Rack was peaceful and quiet below, and a little band of white mist marked the river-course. Dar-

raghstown was hidden by the woods of Comerford, but through an opening on the right hand she could see the lights of Rosslyne. How far off it seemed, and how still. The yellow glimmering disk of the sun dropped behind the mountain, the farmhouse looked a dull clear grey, and the Galtees stood out above the dim stretch of the valley, like a threatening rampart.

The sky wall changed from red to purple, and the shadows lengthened and deepened. The corncrake's monotonous cry rose far below her, and the swallows had ceased glancing and darting above the thatched roofs of the farm-buildings. Helena watched the house unceasingly. She saw the black vehicle led round, then it drove off, rocking and jolting down the laneway between the hedges. Still he did not come.

It was a full hour now since Helena had reached the hill-top, and she felt cold and afraid. She did not for a moment doubt Jim, and she was in no way occupied by

forecasting any shortcomings on his part. She had seen Mary Sheahan, a pretty yellow-haired girl, smartly dressed, and with a slightly conceited air; and no jealous thought ever entered her mind that he could be engaged with her. She had his letter still hid in her dress, and until he should tell her himself that it was false, she would never doubt what was there set down.

Presently her quick ear caught the sound as of an approaching foot. Through the wet grass, heedless of the dew-drops that his feet shook off the blades, Devereux came striding up, and leaning his hand on the end of the great stone, looked at her for a moment while he waited to take breath.

He had no hat, and Helena thought his face looked strangely careworn. She remained silent, waiting for him to speak first, and watching him expectantly.

"Hel," he burst out at last, "I wonder at you."



“What?” She opened her eyes wide, and if he had seen the expression of her face it might have reassured him, but he had covered his own with his hands.

“What!” he repeated angrily; “you were seen with Satterthwaite in the wood on Monday, the day I was in Limerick; ay, by yourself, sitting with him. Listen to me, Hel,” he went on, making a motion with his hand to command her to listen; “I know he’s more your own equal than I am; and if—if—you’d rather have him I don’t want to bind you to me.” Then he stopped, and looked at her with eyes which were blind with tears and trembling lips. Helena’s head had sunk forward on her breast, and she had covered her face with her hands.

All the remembrance of that day spent in the woods with the Englishman rushed in a flood upon her. She was conscious of the impression Satterthwaite and his beautiful place had made upon her, both when she

saw it and since, and the contrast she had drawn in her own thoughts between him and his surroundings and those she was accustomed to. A stinging sense of treachery took possession of her ; and then she had his book that he had lent her too. How wicked, how ungrateful, she felt her conduct to have been, and now Jim was going to abandon her in consequence of it. She felt rather than thought all these things, and filled with horror and contrition, could only sob out his name despairingly :

“ Jim ! oh Jim ! ”

In a moment he was leaning over her, and had pulled down her hands.

“ Hel, was it a lie ? I declare to God if he lied I’ll—— Tell me this moment.”

“ I don’t know,” said she between her sobs. “ We were in the woods, and we met him.” She looked up in his face with streaming eyes. He turned away from her, and standing at a little distance, said :

“I’m no match for you, Hel, I know that; and maybe you’re mistaken. It’s some one like Satterthwaite; he’s one of your own, and he could keep you like a lady; that would be fittest for you; you’re not one of us at all.” The words rang through Helena’s ears, and it seemed to her as if Jim were repeating her own thoughts aloud. He paused for a moment, and went on in a hard, dry voice, that sounded strangely in her stunned ears. “That’s what they’re saying below. Granny says you’re the picture of Miss Helena that married Lamont, and that if—if you got your due you might be a duchess.”

Hel never answered. She had stopped crying, and her breath came in thick and short gasps, and she gazed at him with wide dilated eyes. He stood still a moment as if waiting for a reply, then he came close, and leaning again on the rock, said with a despairing cry :

“Will you speak to me? Hel, speak to me.”

Still she did not answer; she could not. He half fell, half threw himself on the ground, and so kneeling, looked up in her face, now almost grey with pain. Her dumb, frightened eyes met his at last, and as if she read some charm there, her terror and distrust fell from her like an evil dream. Then with a half sob half laugh she drew his head close to her, and leaned her cheek on his hair. He had hardly time to breathe, so quick was her act.

“Why do you say such things to me?” said she in a quick voice shaken yet by a sob.

He put up his hand and loosing one of hers from round his neck held it to his lips for a moment, then he jumped up and lifted her to her feet. They stood looking at each other for a little while; then he drew a long sigh of relief, and stooping forward a little, for he was taller than her by a full

head, he laid a hand on each of her shoulders.

“Hel, nothing can part us now; is it so?”

“Yes.”

Then, he holding her hand, they walked down the hill to find Isi. Jim had desired him to wait by a hedge farther down. It was almost dark; a brown-red mist still lingered over the mountains, and a tiny cloudlet high up had a faint salmon-coloured tinge to one edge, a reflection caught from the Atlantic waves far behind the hills. They passed at the back of the farmhouse, and led by Jim found a path round a field that brought them out in the lane at a point near the road. He walked with them to the gate.

“Good-night,” said Helena. “Will you be at Darraghmore soon?”

“I’ll be there every day from this out,” he replied. “Come over on Saturday.”

And so they parted.



### CHAPTER III.

“‘Es ist wie mit allen Bitterkeiten,’ flüsterte Sophie ihren Nachbar zu. ‘Sie fallen zu schwer auf die Zunge, man kann nicht recht unterscheiden. Obesschmeckt oder nur allen Geschmack betäubt, dergleichen ist natürlich für den wahr, der Liebhaber davon ist.’”—TIECK.



ATTERTHWAITE went to pay a visit to Madam Really the day of the wedding at Tobergeen. He got suddenly tired of the gardening and weeding, and decided to take, and no doubt give his men too, a few hours' holiday and ride down to Buona Vista. He was seized with curiosity to hear about

the wedding, which had suddenly acquired a wonderful interest in this gentleman's eyes since he had heard that the Ferrards were to be there. So his black horse Auster was led round, and he rode off at a trot to catch Madam Really directly she should have finished her two o'clock lunch.

"Mrs. Really is in the garden, sir, but I'll fetch her in to you; the master is in the study," said the servant who opened the door.

"Wait!" said Satterthwaite; "I'll go to the garden; never mind calling her in; show me the way."

He gave the reins as he spoke into the hands of the boy who had followed him up from the lodge.

"The way is open, sir; just go round the house by that walk."

Satterthwaite turned in the direction indicated by the maid-servant, and following a gravelled path found himself in a few minutes in the garden. Madam was in-

visible, and he looked about vainly to discover her among the closely-planted alleys. It was a large well-kept piece of ground covering the whole top of the eminence, and falling in a gentle decline all round from the house. A high wall bristling with glass fenced it about, but in no way interfered with the view of the open country without.

“Mr. Satterthwaite—this way, please!” Madam Really’s clear voice called from a distant corner where she was busy tying up raspberry bushes in neat bundles. She dropped her knife and bass matting, and taking off one clayey glove shook hands with him cordially. “Why did not you come in time for lunch? Come in with me and have some; that ride ought to give you an appetite. You were not to be found the day we called at Rosslyne. I was disappointed, I can assure you; the glimpse we got of the garden was most



tantalising, as you see I only go in for useful things."

"Not altogether," said Satterthwaite, looking at the beds of spring flowers that perfumed the air. "I was sorry to have missed you. I was in the far wood shooting with the Ferrards."

"The Ferrards! so I heard." She burst into a laugh. "Then they accepted your forgiveness in that matter of poaching, eh? Dear me, Mr. Satterthwaite, you are getting on wonderfully with them; what is your secret? Poor Mrs. FitzFfoulkes had the door shut in her face and a jug of water emptied on her head, and I was threatened with the dogs and ignominiously ordered off the premises. And here you have not been a month in the place, and behold you on excellent terms with the whole tribe!"

Though she spoke jestingly she really was both serious and puzzled; and she was looking at him with inquisitive keen eyes.

He laughed.

"You have been told about Charles Ferrard, I see ; that very day I went over to Darraghmore and found the younger ones there. Well, we got on pretty well, and I stumbled upon them in my wood on Monday and we had a little shooting, a pleasant ramble, and some conversation together."

"Did Helena shoot ?" asked his listener, with a smile.

"No ; I couldn't persuade her to do so, though she confessed to a liking for it. What a lovely girl she is !"

"Yes," she replied meaningly ; "Jim Devereux may well be proud of his intended wife."

"Intended wife !" said Satterthwaite in a changed voice. "I remember—yes—you told me something of this before ; I did not know the affair was settled."

"I cannot say if they are actually betrothed," she said in a careless voice, watching him.

“ I hope they are, and that the poor girl has some prospect before her.”

“ When Lord Darraghmore dies, which must be expected soon, she will be destitute. Isi and she know as much of the world as two kittens. He could enlist, but what is there before her ? and she is one whom it would be impossible to do anything for. It seems to me almost providential that this marriage presents itself now ; Devereux is a splendid fellow, and they will get on perfectly together.”

Her companion made no answer. He walked on silently beside her, with a growing feeling of bitterness and determination. He was debating within himself how far he ought to trust what she said ; and what reason, beyond the remote acquaintance she had told him about with the stepbrother, she could have for identifying herself with the Ferrards in this manner. He thought it would have been more natural she should have taken his side instead

of Devereux's. As a lady, he found it odd her sympathies were not with him. However, he was in no way afflicted with self-doubt; and he thought if he could only see Helena again, if nothing untoward occurred to precipitate affairs, this mere boy and girl fancy would give way before his more substantial claims. Miss Ferrard would see the affair in its proper light. She would recognise his position and her own rights. But then, Devereux—Devereux, who had refused to marry the girl his parents had selected for him, and had embroiled himself with them, who was educating and influencing Helena in every way for good. There was the rub! Satterthwaite ground his teeth together. "It will be for her to choose between us," said he to himself; and then he had to dismiss the subject from his thoughts and attend to Madam Really.

"How do you find your workmen get on?"

"They get on as long as I am looking

at them," he replied. "Their dishonesty is simply incredible."

"I told you so," said she. "Between idleness and petty pilfering, life is a difficulty in this country. Indoor servants are rootedly dishonest: they spoil food to an unbearable degree. It is the same all round; and it is that vice makes and keeps this country so poor. They don't think it a sin to help themselves. So the servants will tell you; and you have no idea of the discomfort they can make by filching everything in the way of food. They all do it. Petty, exasperating thieving is the great curse of housekeeping in Ireland."

"Ah!" said he, shaking his head. "I left these men of mine to themselves for an hour or two one day, and, happening to come upon them from an unexpected quarter, there were the whole gang on their backs smoking and cracking jokes—at my expense, I have no doubt. Didn't I pitch into them!"

“Rule them with a rod of iron. If you are in the least easy-going and tolerant, you will make no hand of them. Come down this way and look at the view of Comerford.”

“Your garden is lovely,” said he, following her down a narrow walk bordered with fruit-trees. Madam Really stopped at a little young tree and dipped her nose into a cluster of blossom.

“Isn’t that perfect?” said she, turning to him. “It’s a Reine Marguerite.”

Certainly the garden was exquisite. The summer-snow of the apple-trees was dropping silently beside them, and the sweet ethereal odour of the ripe blossoms was wafted to them on the wings of a soft west wind. The violets were all gone, but white narcissus and golden-yellow and brown wallflowers lined the box-edges. An early butterfly flitted weakly hither and thither, trying its feeble new wings in the warmth and light. The sun was shining brightly,

but a fleecy bank in the south-west promised another shower soon ; and though the gravel was dry and white, the cups of the flowers were overflowing.

When they came to the end of the walk Satterthwaite found himself before three moss-grown stone steps, which led up to a little raised platform, the artificial structure of which was concealed by the rose-bushes and ivy that twined over it. On top was a comfortable garden-seat, and placed before it, on a solid, well-mounted stand, a large telescope. Satterthwaite could not help a smile on seeing it, at the thought of Mrs. Perry's resentment.

"This is my observatory," said madam. "I can see the rabbits at play on Tobergreen, five miles away almost. They have a wholesome terror of this telescope in the town below."

She was adjusting the focus as she spoke, but Satterthwaite stepped over to the crenellated wall to look out. He was surprised

at the wide view that stretched away before him.

The two rivers—the Rack and the smaller but more impetuous Darragh—wound for miles behind. The woods of Comerford were lovely. The chestnuts were in leaf, and the pale soft-green looked exquisitely tender against the brown-green of the later oak-branches. The sycamores and beeches were fast changing, and the dull winter-green of the pines formed an almost black background to the soft transition hues of their neighbours. The spring was at that charming transparent stage. Little by little, as of a revelation gradually imparted, does she allow her beauties to appear, charily and grudgingly sometimes, and sometimes snatches them back wantonly—crushing and hurting her own treasures.

“Look at the woods through the glass; you can nearly see the things grow,” said she, wheeling the stand a little forward.

He obeyed, and wondered at the clear-



ness and perfection with which every leaf and branchlet, in all their delicate colouring, were visible. Then he turned it towards the village. The Mill-house windows were all dark and untenanted—not a sign of life to be seen in it. The green door was shut, and so was the gate of the front, which was choked with the overgrowth of the shrubs.

Madam Really stood beside him, watching with a smile, in which bitterness and amusement were oddly blended, the direction in which the telescope was now turned.

“Bruton says any moment may carry the old man off now. He has had a stroke, and seems to be inviting another by every means in his power—lies all day on the sofa drinking whiskey, and never takes any exercise. I wonder how it will be with Helena! Perry tells me if they pay what they owe they won’t have enough to bury him. They got only eighty-five pounds this quarter-day.”

“ I did not fancy, from what I had been told, that they were in the habit of paying their debts.”

Satterthwaite continued to look through the telescope.

“ Helena pays for everything. She cleared off even Clan’s scores in the town since he left. Poor child ! how does she manage to keep the money from Char ? He is a truculent monster, that. Perry says he tried hard to make him pay him the money, but Hel insisted on having it. That’s Jim Devereux’s doings, I imagine : he has a good influence over her. I really think I’ll go down and make another effort to see her.”

“ If she doesn’t refuse the Perrys, why should she you ? It is a great pity that creature should be so left to herself. Do try again. Perhaps now she will be more amenable.”

“ I think I will do it,” said madam in a thoughtful tone. “ She is enormously

changed of late ; has got so quiet and stay-at-home. Perhaps she would see me. But, after all, what good could I do her ?”

“Something might be done,” he persisted. “I assure you I do not like the idea even of her life, and she is such an interesting——”

“Take care of yourself, Mr. Satterthwaite,” interrupted madam. “Miss Helena’s *beaux yeux* have even won over Perry to her side.”

“Perry, indeed !”

“I see you don’t like Mr. Perry ; neither do I. He is not a good type—though, alas ! there are plenty like him. What an idiot his wife is. He married her for her money and connections. What little brains she ever had, he has long ago eliminated from her composition. He is a regular bully of the domestic order.”

“So I fancied,” said Satterthwaite carelessly. “Is he well off ?”

“Very comfortable. He makes from

six to seven hundred a year, and his farms bring him in something too."

"Why are they so uncultivated—those girls I mean?"

"Bah! what do they want? I have been told that he regrets the cost of their education; says the money would have been better invested if put out to interest for portions for them. I dare say he is right, too—according to his lights."

"Come, Mrs. Really, you do not speak your own sentiments there."

"Quite true. But what social standard have these people? They are forbidden to know Protestants, and it is from Protestants only that they can get any reflection of culture or refinement. Perry laughs at this prohibition—very naturally, for he does business with them as much as with Catholics—but the daughters and their mother are consistent and religious. You see the clergy are not yet awake to the need of higher class education and refinement. Father Quaide,

for example—he is an excellent, charitable man ; but can you fancy him laying down the laws of society ? That, indeed, is a thing no man ever can do. Don't laugh, Mr. Satterthwaite ; I am serious. What is wanted in Ireland is a national patriotic spirit. Yes, just that. Don't mistake me. I don't mean this agitation business in the least—there is too much of that—I mean a common-sense, solid love of progress. Look at Perry ; he is making nearly a thousand a year out of this district, and he despises and looks down on it. In Dublin it's the same. They all want to be in London ; they ape London ways and London fashions. The real enemies of the country are not the Fenians, nor the agitators, but the Anglo-maniacs—the would-be Londoner set. ' Nothing is worth while in Ireland ! ' that's their cry. ' It is a charming place to live out of.' The Miss Perrys don't think it worth while dressing themselves

because this is Darraghstown, and not Dublin; in Dublin, anybody that has ever taken an excursion-ticket to London is the same. Their papa only shaves once a week for the same reason. This is the way with these people all over the country. They have their heads in the clouds. They would be all absentees if they could."

"It is perfectly true. How in the world would you cure this?"

"I'd give them a dose of Home Rule. I would give them a legislative chamber in Dublin, and then you would see them wake up. They'll fight, no doubt; but I would give them a chance. If they prove themselves fit and able to govern themselves——"

"Oh, impossible! This country—England, I should say—has set its face against that altogether. It's absurd. I am really surprised at you!"

"What matter about the impossibility? I do not believe it is impossible. Stranger

things have been done. And then as soon as the scheme shall have failed, nobody is any worse off than before."

"I doubt that. You cannot tell what mischief they will be at. Who would the representatives be?"

"Well, I do hope the landed gentry will come forward, and that this perpetual absentee spirit will be put an end to."

"You will will have a religious war—that will be the end."

"Oh no! The two religions will work together nicely. Why, the chiefs of the Home Rule party are Protestants. You see that does not affect their position or influence in the least. In fact, I look to Home Rule to restore the *prestige* of which the Disestablishment deprived the cultured classes. What a blunder that Church Act was!"

"I should like to know upon what grounds you say that. I considered it a disgraceful burden to this country."

“ Well, I choose to consider that view of the case to be a purely sentimental one. It cost nothing; the weight all fell on the landed gentry; and, moreover, that money was spent in the country, and in return there was the presence of a refined, cultivated family in every parish, in a position to command respect, and with great influence. Now their *prestige* is gone, their influence destroyed. Who has been the gainer by it? The money has not been re-distributed as was expected, and a very great and very much needed civilising agency has been lost. That measure was a fatal anachronism. It was just, I dare say; but it was inexpedient. As if these barbarians could afford to lose even that civilising element!”

“ What do you think of this new project of local government boards?”

“ It would be better than nothing; but a central governing board in Dublin, with powers enough to make it worth the while of the landed gentry to keep their places



in it, would be infinitely preferable. London would be none the worse for a little depletion."

"Parliament could bear it very well too," said Satterthwaite dryly. "But I fail to see how the character of the people is to be raised by that mere scheme."

"I know them longer and better than you do ; I know all their faults, and I have no scruple, as I dare say you know," she added with a laugh, "in telling them ; but I know what can be made of the same mere Irishry, and I know the talents that are wasted and lost, and turned to evil use ; and, in short, Mr. Satterthwaite, I have faith in them."

"Yes, you are one of those who look dispassionately on their vices ; you find their cause and origin in history, in their religion, or in social and economic causes ; in fact, while admitting their wickedness, you hold them irresponsible. Reformers

like you, Mrs. Really, are the most difficult of all to deal with ; you are so liberal and so wide of vision, one cannot get hold of you anywhere."

"Well, I know my own faults too, I hope, but I tell you what you want to do is to give the people some power in their own hands. In religion they are tied up hard and fast ; they have nothing but a feast of egg-shells by way of education ; and after all—a parliament across the sea and nothing but vague rumours of its doings, and expensive and one-sided newspaper comments, doesn't supply a very satisfactory field for their superabundant mental activity. London is a long long way from Darraghstown, though it is far too near Dublin."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Satterthwaite ; "well, Mrs. Really, I hope you may live to see the day when you will have a Home Rule Parliament in Dublin. If I thought you would have a seat in it I'd vote for it with

all my heart, and school boards in every county."

"I think I'd prefer school boards," said she musingly; "they're more really wanted."

"Well, on the principle of choosing the lesser of two evils I would too."

"Oh dear, you are incorrigible I am afraid."

"Yes, Mrs. Really, on that point you will find me thoroughly impervious to—er—reason——"

"Dear me!" said a voice behind us, "you are at politics, Esther. How do you do, Mr. Satterthwaite?" Satterthwaite turned at the voice. There was Mr. Really, walking with the aid of a stick, coming down the alley. "My wife is a politician, sir; I leave that sort of thing to her. I am content with the newspaper, but she only reads it to contradict it, I think. I don't know how you can be bothered, my dear; and—I don't know

any other lady who does interest herself in those things." This was said with a timid primness of tone that did not escape Satterthwaite.

"It's a bad habit I have acquired abroad. Our salon in Vienna was always full of diplomats of all sorts; and moreover, what has one in Ireland but politics? We don't read; we don't paint; we are all utterly ignorant and inæsthetic. We are exactly fifty years behind England in culture—fully fifty years, Mr. Satterthwaite. Scotland is behind too, but then Scotland has retained all the virtues of the *ancien régime*; whereas we have only the vices."

"Oh! Mrs. Really, are you not very hard on your own country?"

"I don't know that! already you have found my prophecy fulfilled in one point—have you not?"

"I met Father Quaide riding out in your direction, Mr. Satterthwaite." This was from Really, who was clearly at sea in the

conversation. "He has got his new nag—cost him seventy-five guineas ; it's a heavier animal than yours, but fully as handsome."

"Father Quaide must be well off, considering the poverty of this district——"

"He is very comfortable," put in madam so quickly as to finish his sentence for him, "as you will find if he invites you to dinner. Six guineas a dozen for his sherry, and claret to match. Mr. Carrington was astonished the day he dined with him."

"Carrington ! by-the-way I must return their visit ; and tell me, then, are the Protestant gentry on such friendly terms with Father Quaide ?"

"Well, to tell the truth, this abominable disestablishment has rather caused an interruption of amicabilities ; as long as their reverences were on dining terms with us heretics, they could hardly, without violating the laws of hospitality, promulgate that we were destined for eternal perdition.

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Before the Church Act there were the friendliest feelings possible between both sects ; it created such bitterness on the part of the Protestants that these relations were interrupted ; it could hardly be otherwise. Then came the infallibility and clenched matters. After all, infallibility was the natural outcome of the disestablishment of the Roman Church. The temporal power was swept away, so they set to work to shake themselves together just as we did with our Sustentation Fund and calling ourselves the Church of Ireland."

"But this bitterness will die out, things will readjust themselves, you will see," said Satterthwaite.

"The coolness unhappily has been turned to profit by some people; they have swept it in and included it with other things under the head of denominational education. Mixed marriages have been made impossible, social intercourse discouraged. Ah ! there is no end to the mischief that measure has brought

about. I really think it was the prime mover and originator of the new infallibility dogma."

"Fiat justitia ruat cœlum," said Satterthwaite, laughing; "I can only think of the disestablishment that it was a monstrous, disgraceful anomaly to maintain a Protestant Church at the expense of an enormous majority of Roman Catholics——"

"If that is the principle you go upon, Home Rule has the very same recommendation to your favour," she interrupted him in sardonic tones.

"I don't believe in Home Rule," said her husband; "it's all humbug. What do these people want? let them mind their own business, they're only too well off. Esther, I believe you'll end as a Communist; would you believe it, she actually took the part of the Reds in that last insurrection in Paris."

"It wasn't that I sympathised with their mischief," said she, "but there must have

been some idea among them—some sentiment, now, and I've got an eye for a sentiment, though you might not believe it of me, and indeed my husband is too conservative—too blue. I affect a shade of—well, not red exactly—a sort of salmon tinge, mainly for the sake of contrast.”

Satterthwaite laughed. Mrs. Really amused him thoroughly; the sharp voice and keen cynical countenance had a flavour for him that was both novel and interesting. He wished she were a little softer, and that she would show a more womanly, kindly feeling to poor Miss Ferrard. There was something harsh and cruel in the idea that, because the girl was in such desperate circumstances, she should be allowed to drift into the position of a mere boor's wife. She was young enough to learn, to be trained yet to take the place in society which belonged to her rank. And how pretty she was—what a wild interesting face! Satterthwaite as he rode home



began thinking of his encounter in the woods, threading his way in the undergrowth with Helena, and watching the sweet flitting shadows as they fell upon her face. It was only a few days ago, but already he felt it too long, and he began to ask himself with impatience when he was to see her again, and how. She was at Tobergeen that day. Things could not have gone so far, he thought; for if Devereux's parents knew of his entanglement with her, they never would have invited her to the feast—that was clear enough. He determined to be at Darraghmore early next day to meet her. There was no time to be lost.

Satterthwaite rode over to Darraghmore the next day, in the hope of finding some news of the Ferrards there. The door was opened, after a long delay, by the servant Biddy, who looked sleepy and answered rather crossly, "that himself was at Tobergeen, and she didn't know if

he'd be back before night or not ; he didn't come back from the weddin' yesterday."

" If he does come home to-day, say that Mr. Satterthwaite of Rosslyne will be here to-morrow afternoon."

There was nothing to be done now but ride back, and feeling disappointed and baffled, he returned home. Close to his own entrance-gates he overtook Lawyer Perry driving along in his dirty gig.

" Good-day," he cried. " What has become of you lately? I was just driving up to ask for you."

" Come along," said Satterthwaite, riding on before the gig, " I was going back to lunch." Perry drove after him, and they soon reached the house. A man led away the gig and his master's horse, and they ascended the hall-door steps. Perry stared round him with an amazement that made Satterthwaite smile.

" My word !" he cried, " but you have improved the place ; you English have

taste, surely ; but then 'tis you have the time and money to gratify it too. I never saw anything so pretty ; it beats Lord Comerford's to fits."

"I cannot imagine living in the country without a garden."

Satterthwaite felt in a mischievous humour. He was disappointed in his expedition to Darraghmore, and now had a malicious inclination to get some fun out of the worthy attorney.

"Can't you ? ha, ha !" laughed he, "how well we do it ! What's the use of spending money on things of that sort ? Madam Really has a garden too, I believe ; I dare say you and she are the only ones who have. Who is to see them, and where's the good ?"

"H'm ! that's a matter of taste, Mr. Perry !" replied Satterthwaite dryly ; then to himself, "Who's to see them, and where's the good ?" he repeated, noting Mr. Perry's unshaven chin and tumbled linen ; "I wish

madam were here to enjoy this confirmation of her opinion. I begin to believe what she says, and that there is something needed to keep these creatures from lapsing into their original barbarism ; it was not enough to have conquered the country, something should have been done to civilise the natives. Fancy a well-to-do country attorney in England shaving only on Sundays, and behaving in general like this fellow."

"How is your neighbour, Lord Darraghmore?" asked Satterthwaite, when they were in the study.

"Faith, I don't know ; if he doesn't keep alive till next quarter-day, I can't tell how it will be with them for money. Eighty pounds was all I had for Miss Hel last time."

"Miss Hel ! she seems to be the manager."

"Since Clan went I give her the money. That other young villain, Char,

as they call him, wanted to get it, but I always give it to Hel. Ha!" went on Perry, with a chuckle, "she's a well-plucked one that—a splendid girl. She rules that house now—has them well in hand. I wonder how it's going to end with her and young Devereux, here."

"Eh! how do you mean?" asked Satterthwaite, not ingenuously, but he felt some morbid eagerness to get the particulars from Perry.

"Bah!" went on Perry, who was eating ham in huge mouthfuls "he'll never think of marrying her, he'd never be that fool. There's lots of farmers' girls hereabout with their seven or eight hundred, ay, and twelve hundred pounds, would be well off to get him."

"If he would only think so," said Satterthwaite, with a faint smile. "Take a little more spirits."

"Augh!" said Perry, speaking in his tumbler, "that'll turn out all right yet."

"What do you think will become of that girl? The income dies with the old man, does it not?"

"It does! I don't know; the boys can enlist, anyhow. What a lot of books you have, Mr. Satterthwaite!" He was standing before some half-filled shelves. "Pretty picture! A Madonna that now, hey! you're High Church?"

It was a good copy of the famous Beatrice Cenci, that Satterthwaite, who had inherited an artistic taste, had picked up at a sale in London. He was astonished at Perry. However he replied gravely, ignoring his first question :

"I am not High Church; in fact, just now I don't attend church."

"Don't you now!" said the lawyer, with a grin; "that wouldn't do for me. I'm a business-man." Then he took up a beautiful copy of Faust and opened it. "Ah, a French book, I see. You have been abroad?"

"Yes, I've been on the Continent. Every one goes nowadays, you know."

"Do! do they indeed! I've never been farther than London. These girls of mine are persecuting me to give them a trip on the Continent. I think really I'll send them to Lourdes" (pronounced Lowrds) "on one of these pilgrimages. Have you ever been, Mr. Satterthwaite? Ah, no! I was forgetting. Not indeed but they're dearer than Cook's tickets, but they seem to be all the go."

"They do indeed!" replied Satterthwaite a little absently. He was thinking of what had been said rather more than of the answer it required. Perry was now standing looking at the gem of Satterthwaite's small but valuable collection—a Turner—which he had inherited from his father. He was amused to see Perry put on a knowing air as he surveyed it.

"My daughter Ellen, Mrs. Sheedy, did

that sort of thing at school. Water-colours, isn't it?—one of your own?"

Satterthwaite, who had his weak points like every one else in the world, got almost angry at what he thought must be deliberate impudence on his friend's part; he answered, however, composedly :

"It belongs to me, I am happy to say. That picture is worth two thousand guineas."

Perry stared at him as if he thought him mad—no doubt he did.

"Good Lord! And that Blessed Virgin on the stand by the books?"

"The C—oh! I paid thirty-five only for that."

"I don't know anything about pictures," said he, turning his back on a fine sea-piece; "they are things, like horses, a man ought to know something of before he goes buying or even looking at them."

Perry uttered this truism with the voice of one announcing an original




discovery. He was staring now at a quantity of splendid blue Nankin only that morning unpacked, and which was piled on a pretty oak buffet. "Is that a new set, may I ask you? They're very queer shapes."

"Well, they are not new. Oh no! They're curiosities, too."

"Oh, indeed! Curiosities, too, are they?" said Perry dryly, with a contemptuous grin at a blue dragon vase. Satterthwaite had a good mind to tell him the cost—it would have shocked him as much as that of the Turner—but he judged that his friend had had lesson enough for one day.

"Won't you look at the horses?" said he, "and see the new fittings of the stables? Come along. Light a cigar first." Then he handed him an excellent cigar, and having helped himself they set out for the stables. Once arrived in the newly-paved yard, Perry assumed a very



different manner from that he had displayed in the study. He spoke in a loud authoritative voice, and pulled the horses about in a way calculated to show that of them at least he knew more than his share. He discovered an incipient spavin in one of the best horses, and traces of firing in Black Auster before he had looked at them for ten minutes. He directed all his criticisms to the groom, ignoring Satterthwaite altogether in the conversation, except when he had any disparaging remarks about the horses to make ; he then gave their owner the benefit of them. Satterthwaite was thoroughly diverted. He saw Perry was taking his revenge, and with a mixture of goodnature and mischievous fun, resolved to allow him to rehabilitate himself in his own good opinion.

“ Handsome screws, Mr. Satterthwaite ! very nice, elegant beasts for easy ridin’ and drivin’ ; but law bless you ! those horses would leave their legs after them in

the mud here in winter. That brown horse, now, he's something like ! I'd enter him for Punchestown if I had him. But Lord, man ! it's a stronger brute than that you'd want here. Less blood and more bone." Then he pinched the windpipe of the poor horse as he spoke. The animal did not cough—to Perry's evident chagrin. " Ay, ay !" went on the audacious lawyer, speaking in a sort of depreciating cheapening tone, as if Satterthwaite were wanting to sell the horse. " Sound enough—yes, I dare say he's sound ; stands well too ! but he's a bad head. Worth eighty now, I dare say."

Perry was standing with his legs apart and his hands in his pockets, leaning a little back, and with a malicious sparkle in his cool grey eyes. Satterthwaite shook his head and laughed good-humouredly. The horse had cost two hundred pounds, and was well worth the money, but he did not choose to tell Perry so. He signed to

the man to put back the animals in their stalls.

"I'll tell you who can ride," Perry went on; "Miss Hel. I saw her fly over the paddock on Jim Devereux's colt the other day; it did me good to look at her. She sits as well as himself. Did you see the colt?"

"I had a look at it—a fine well-bred beast. I've a good mind to bid for it. He would be worth a venture."

"Everything's in the education of him," said Perry in his usual didactic tone. "He's clever, but he wants careful riding and education. If he's well broke I wouldn't say but what he'd fetch his two hundred in a year or so. Jim had always a wonderful hand with a horse."

"Come back to the study and have something before you go. Jenkins can send round your trap to the front door."

"That little horse of mine, now," said Perry, raising his strident voice for the

groom's benefit, "is more use than any one of these fine-breds of yours. I ask you what work will you get out of them here?"

"Wait till you see those hunters after a run on the grass." Satterthwaite began to get impatient of the fellow, and had had enough of his boasting. "I hope to have some good riding next season here."


Then Perry swaggered indoors after him. Once in the library removed from the tempting field of display he was subdued and deferential again—at least, comparatively so. He did not remain longer than was necessary to swallow another dose of brandy and water; the dirty gig and ill-groomed horse were waiting without, and he had already overstayed his time.

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## CHAPTER IV.

“Habitual associates are known to exercise a great influence over each other’s minds and manners. Those whose actions are for ever before our eyes, whose words are for ever in our ears, will lead us, albeit against our will, slowly, gradually, imperceptibly perhaps, to act and speak as they do.”—BRONTË.

“WO of the finest ewes and a lamb! It is a bad job for us, Hel, I can tell you that. However, they don’t know it was Rusty did it; and what you have to do now is to shoot him immediately. Once a dog begins that work he’ll never leave it off.”


Jim Devereux got no answer to this speech, and as he was lying in the rich grass of his meadow at Darraghmore with a thick tuft of buttercups and long-stalked clover between his face and Helena's, he did not see the rebellious frown that gathered in hers.

"Cawth says"—this was from Isi, who was sitting a little farther off—"he came in this morning between four and five. I never knew him to go out at night that way before, and he certainly had blood on his shoulder."

"Rusty!" called Helena suddenly, "come here, sir!"

The old dog obeyed, slinking across to her with drooping ears and tail, and stood beside her while she ran her hands over the curly coat and examined it for the stains of his cruel sport. The brute looked conscious and sulky, knowing well that he was the subject of discussion.

"Oh! it's he did it; you needn't be in



the least uncertain," went on Devereux. "Since FitzGerald's dog was shot two years ago, there hasn't been a sheep worried in the whole district, and that fellow had killed a hundred before he was stopped. Twelve pounds' worth in one night is no joke. You may as well shoot him at once, for my father is going to watch for him to-night himself, and he knows whose dog he is well."

He raised himself on his elbow as he said this and looked at her fixedly. Helena let fall Rusty's ears and pushed him away from her.

"I'll do it—if you wish, Jim," said she submissively and sadly. Then she sat silent for a while, looking in wonder at her disgraced favourite, picturing him in her mind's eye harrying the defenceless, frightened sheep from end to end of the field in the dark quiet of the night, tearing their throats, one after another, till they bled to death or fell dead from exhaustion



and terror, and only giving over the cruel sport when daybreak warned the marauder, almost human in his cunning and malignity, that it was time to withdraw.

Devereux lay quietly in the grass, watching her face at his ease.

"Are you fretting for the dog, Hel?" he asked at last, seeing that her eyes were filled and ready to run over. "I'll get you a nice young terrier instead of him."

"No—no," she replied.

"What is it then—eh?" He crawled over nearer to her and looked up into her face.

She bit her lip, but did not reply.

"What ails you? Have you been hearing more of Mary Sheahan—eh, is that it? If she'd the bank, let alone twelve hundred pounds, I'd never marry her. And when I say a thing I mean it; they may say what they like."

She looked at him in an absent way. She was thinking of his words, and was

occupied in picturing to herself the different kind of family life they suggested. Jim's father and mother seemed so interested in, so careful of his prospects. It seemed odd and puzzling to her, for whom no one, save Isi, was concerned in the least. She came and went, lived and acted as she chose—at least, since Clan's departure; and the indolent Char had found that her strength, united to Isi's, was more than a match for his. Cawth grumbled as usual; but Hel had subdued her too, and the old man was now almost imbecile. She felt some curiosity as to the way of the household at Tobergeen. Save the Perrys', she had no experience of domesticity, and their ways were anything but mysterious. The mother and daughters made common cause against their lord and ruler, to circumvent whose tyranny by every kind of deceit was the business of their lives. She despised them heartily. Open warfare was her mode of encountering all opposing forces; and the

falsehoods and petty cunning of her friends seemed to her as useless as they were ridiculous and cowardly. Jim's mother, on the contrary, agreed perfectly with his father. Helena could see that for herself, and she was wonderfully puzzled to understand how it came about that Mrs. Devereux, while remaining on good terms with her husband, could preserve an almost neutral position in the dispute as to the Sheahan match. This complication was a standing puzzle to Hel. She knew that Jim was his mother's idol, and on that account she thought she should be altogether on his side. To remain neutral while having a bias in either direction was an impossibility to her. She could not even fancy herself looking on dispassionately at a dispute between Isi and Char.

"You see," went on Jim, nibbling the pink head of a daisy as he spoke, "Father Quaide has such a pull on her. There's always the way. I was at her there after Mary and Delahunty went home. She

was crying in the kitchen, and she said to me, 'Jim, if you'd bring home that nice girl, now, instead of Mary, I'd have some one with me to look to me.' 'So,' I said—"

But at this point the daisy's head had been all nibbled away and a new one had to be selected. Perhaps it was this operation that made him pause a full minute before he finished his speech. However, first clearing his voice, he began again :

"I said, 'There isn't any use deceiving yourself. You know what my mind's on,' for she does know, Hel. This week back, since he," nodding his head in the direction of Darraghstown, "got so bad ; and then—'Well,' said she, 'do you think you could turn [convert] her ?' 'I never asked her,' said I ; and Hel, I never will."

Helena looked at him with eyes that spoke only of dumb, loving trustfulness. She hardly understood the drift of what he had been saying. She could appreciate his magnanimity, but was far from conceiving

its extent. She knew nothing of the intense religious feeling of the woman who, next to her now, had the best right to him. Hel's own religion had as little meaning to her as the faded crest and motto or empty title of her family, which she hated and felt in a way ashamed of, just as the boys did. And she, too, was beginning, like them, to feel a hungry desire to be away from where their barren distinction only served to bring on them a galling notoriety. She had so keen an instinctive sense of her incongruous position, that whenever she met any well-dressed people, or carriages, on the road, her first impulse was to conceal herself. The comments which she felt they must make were unbearable, even in her own imagination. To live as much out of sight as possible, to avoid every one, had become her practice ; and since Devereux had fallen in her path this had seemed easy and pleasant, and all difficulties and troubles had come to an end. She never thought

of the future. That care was left to him, and Helena, fearless and sturdy to all besides, was pliant as a reed in his hands.

“There’s Satterthwaite—look!” called Isi excitedly. “There, he’s riding up to the house.”

They could see the black horse and his rider approach the house at a rapid trot; then, after a moment’s parley with the servant, the animal was turned and urged at a gallop across the fields in their direction.

Devereux sat upright, and began to whistle carelessly. Helena looked a little downcast; perhaps the remembrance of Satterthwaite’s pretty little book, and the undeserved ill-treatment it had met with at her hands, pricked her conscience somewhat. She had hurled it under her bed the evening of the wedding at Tobergeen, where it lay, crushed and dusty, along with a heap of rubbish, the accumulation of years. Isi, who liked the friendly

Englishman, got up and walked to meet him.

Satterthwaite was not long reaching the trio. The black horse took great bounds through the grass, and, panting and foam-flecked, drew up a few paces off. Devereux had risen, and was standing near. Satterthwaite stepped forward to Helena, and with a frank, pleasant smile, held out his hand. She took it in a hesitating sort of way, and without looking at him; she glanced instead to Devereux, just as her brother, when in doubt, sought her eye.

"How are you, Mr. Satterthwaite? We were waiting for you," said the young farmer heartily. "Freney's not been out these two days, so he will be as fresh as a daisy."

"Indeed! My horse is not too hard-worked either," replied Satterthwaite. "We can try them at the hurdle if you like. What do you think of him?" said he, turning to Helena. "Don't you think he

would suit you nicely? He is as gentle as possible; my cousins have ridden him."

Helena smiled; but she would not look at the horse, scarcely at its owner, who was walking along beside her. Satterthwaite was puzzled by the change in her demeanour, and was half inclined, in his masculine vanity, to attribute it to coquetry. He caught a glance or two that was intended for Jim—who marched along stolidly with Isi, far more occupied with the points of the horse than anything else—and began to put Hel down in his own mind for an arrant little flirt. He thought of the day in the wood, and her smiles and unembarrassed talk; and now, because this handsome lout of hers was with them, she could not spare him even a look. He made an inward vow to drag an answer out of her.

"You have not told me how you liked the little Shakespeare, Miss Ferrard; which of the plays have you been reading?"



A sudden glance, quickly followed by a hot flush, ensued upon this. He went on: "My favourite is 'The Tempest.' I think you spoke of 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' Did you not?"

"I had no time to—to——" Helena felt really guilty. "I must send you back the book."

"I wish," said he, walking a little closer to her, and pulling his four-footed companion with a sudden awkward lurch after him, "you would do me the favour to keep it—do, please. I have a couple more of them, and it is a handy little thing to carry about."

Hel, who had a strong suspicion that the back of the "handy little thing" was broken, looked confused, while relieved.

"I will, thank you," she managed to say.

By this time they had reached the paddock. A hurdle was erected in the middle of it, and Devereux and Isi hastened to

bring out the young colt. Helena and Satterthwaite remained together. She was looking admiringly at the horse, which stood obediently beside him.

"He is handsome!" she said at last, and, stretching out her hand, she stroked Auster's forehead gently.

"I have a side-saddle at Rosslyne," said Satterthwaite, feeling encouraged; "and I should so much like you to try the horse. I know you ride. Will you?"

Helena's eyes sparkled with delight, and she looked up into his with unfeigned pleasure.

"I will," said she enthusiastically. "I do like it."

Then the others came up, and with them Freney, bridled and saddled, and evidently full of spirits, tossing his head and snuffing. Satterthwaite ran his eye over him with a satisfied air that did not escape young Devereux.

"Yes, Mr. Satterthwaite," said he; "but

you wait till Freney's as old as your horse, and he'll look as well; he isn't got up quite such a dandy either."

This was true, for the black horse was shining fresh from the hands of his careful groom, whereas Freney had been merely rubbed down with a wisp of straw.

"Will you try a jump with me?" said Devereux. "Or I will give him a trot round first, to take the impudence out of him."

As he spoke he laid his hand on the pommel and sprang into the saddle—an old, worn-out thing, pieced and stitched in ever so many places. That he was a practised rider could be seen at once from his Centaur-like poise. He had thrown off his hat, and with his yellow curly head, and broad-shouldered, handsome, shapely form, looked like a picture in the sunlight. Satterthwaite glanced from him to Miss Ferrard, and saw that her eyes were following his every movement with some-

thing more than admiration. He felt, without knowing it almost, some dull sense of discomfort. The leaps and curvetings of the wild creature, chafing at the restraint of the heavy bit, feeling all the odious weight upon his back and debating how it were best to get rid of it, were delightful to Helena. She turned her back on Satterthwaite, and encouraged Devereux at the pitch of her voice.

“Take the gate, Jim!” she cried excitedly. “Over with him!”

“No, not yet,” he replied. Then, after a turn or two, he rode up to them.

“Let me up, Jim—do!” begged Isi.

“No; I’m to ride him!” said his sister, imperiously.

“What!” cried Satterthwaite. “Ride on that saddle, Miss Ferrard! How can you venture——”

Devereux was off, and seizing her, swung her lightly up. How she fixed herself in the old saddle he could not tell;

but there she was, sitting up straight and to all appearance quite comfortably.

"Give me the whip—oh, Jim, do!" She stooped over pleadingly.

"Not a whip; I don't want an inquest on you."

She pouted, and shortening up the rein, dealt the colt a slap on the neck that started him at a wild gallop down the field. Satterthwaite with difficulty repressed a cry of alarm, but the young farmer and Isi burst out laughing when they saw first her hat and veil, then her comb, fall to the ground, and, last of all, her long twisted hair all fly in a loose cloud on her shoulders. She galloped up and jumped off, without waiting for the aid proffered by Satterthwaite. Her eyes were dilated and sparkling, and a rose-flush lighted up her face.

"I'm shaken to pieces," she panted.

"Isi, come and look for my comb. Now

mind, Jim, when I've tied up my hair I'm going to jump the hurdle."

"That you won't," he muttered; he was angry, though proud at the same time, of Satterthwaite's admiring glances, and he thought the girl's wild spirits, innocent and spontaneous though they were, out of place. He mounted the colt and rode away; slowly Satterthwaite followed, leading his horse still, to aid in the search for Miss Ferrard's missing gear. Presently it was found, and Hel twisted up her long glossy hair in two tails and stuck it in.

"Ride Auster instead," said Satterthwaite coaxingly. "Do, please, try him; he is as gentle as a lamb, I assure you."

She cast a doubtful look at her lover, who seemed to be sulkily contemplating the hurdle, then at the tempter beside her. Satterthwaite read consent in her eyes before she spoke, and in a minute he had lifted her up, and was placing the reins in her hand. He led the horse for-

ward a little, then handing her the whip, let go his hold of the bridle. She rode straight over to Devereux, who said something to her in a low voice that made her hang her head. She took two turns round the field, then back to Satterthwaite.

"I will get down, please," said she coldly.

"Doesn't he go nicely?" said he—he was eager to hear her praise his horse; "don't you find him easy to ride."

"Yes, very—very nice," she answered constrainedly; Satterthwaite was in the act of lifting her down as she said this. He held her for an instant in his grasp, and leaning forward, said looking into her eyes as he did so :

"Would you like to ride him always, to own him? tell me."

But Helena, with a lithe movement, slipped away without answering, and as if afraid to remain or to trust herself longer, ran across the field to where Jim

was. Perhaps this girl, who was as unsophisticated as a savage, and as truthful as only women of the very highest and most cultured stamp are or can be, did not understand his meaning. The Perrys would not have been in the least puzzled by it.

Satterthwaite sprang into the saddle and was after her directly.

“Come and leap the hurdle,” he cried to Devereux. He was eager for the contest, and with Helena there to look on and act as umpire, felt himself capable of putting Auster at the side of a house. Devereux too was excited and disputatious. He had got the advantage over Satterthwaite; the position was his beforehand—to keep it was now his care; and this rich, elegant, well-dressed Englishman, with his glossy prancing horse, was no mean rival.

“I’ll go first,” shouted Satterthwaite, moving down the field so as to give himself a run. Auster cleared the hurdle like



a bird. Hel, who was standing well away on one side, clapped her hands with enthusiasm. Then it was Devereux's turn, and he too did well.

"Jim, Jim!—let me try; do!" she cried; "I won't fall off, you'll see."

"No!" he said gruffly. "You couldn't jump without the crutches."

"Let me send up to Rosslyne for the side-saddle. Do, Miss Ferrard!" pleaded Satterthwaite; "I'll be back with it in half an hour."

She would have liked dearly to give the permission. And it was with her eyes fixed on Devereux's face that she answered no.

Satterthwaite saw this, and it nerved him to further effort. "I will go for it without your leave," he said; "I know you would like it, and why should you not? You are free to do what you like?"

This last sentence was more a question than a statement, and was uttered stoop-

ing down almost to her face. He began to turn the horse's head to go, but she said imperiously :

“Don't, Mr. Satterthwaite. I will not ride your horse.” Then she called to Devereux: “The hurdle is too low—take him at the gate.”

The gate was a rickety old structure, with a hollow filled with mud on the other side. A soft fall, if the animal did not leap far enough. Satterthwaite, who was feverishly excited now, sent his horse at it, and cleared the whole thing with a leap wide enough to have taken him across the Rack. Devereux followed, the colt jumped short, and slipping in the mud fell heavily with his rider. Jim uttered a cry—moved purely, he said afterwards, by terror for his horse; but Satterthwaite never heard it in the agonised shriek that burst from Helena. In a moment, before he could dismount, she had flung herself over the gate and was

dragging the luckless rider from the confused heap in the hollow.

“ Oh, Jim, Jim !” she wailed pitifully ;  
“ are you hurt ? Oh ! say you’re not !”

Isi lent his aid, and Satterthwaite, and the fallen hero was soon upon his legs. Except for a shake, and a good deal of mud, he was none the worse. Then the colt was pulled on his feet—he too had escaped with a dirty coat ; and Devereux, sitting on the ditch side rubbing his pate, felt bound to make some acknowledgment for their trouble.

“ You thought I was killed, eh ?” said he, addressing Helena, who with white face and lips was trying to laugh as she supported herself against the gate. Satterthwaite was watching her with a feeling that was gradually deepening into despair. She did not answer, but raising her head a little looked at Jim with her splendid eyes.

The other man turned away, and began to tighten the straps of his stirrups.

He would go home straight, he thought ; the sooner the better. Then the gate was opened ; Isi took the colt, and led him on in front ; Helena and Devereux walked together ; Satterthwaite followed, walking along beside his horse. Everything looked different to him now, the warm spring air had become choking and oppressive, the stable-yard was an ill-kept, offensive den, and the dreary, tumble-down old house had suddenly lost all its charm. He could see the mountains through an opening in the trees ; and a sudden whim took him to go away and ride to Kilnacronan, a village perched on the side of the hills, just to pass the day, and to get off out of sight of them, and try to reason himself out of the depression that had grown upon him. So he mounted and rode out past the kitchen door without even looking for his companions. He had not got far when a shout came after him.

“Mr. Satterthwaite, don’t go ! Please

wait!" It was Devereux; he ran after him and besought him to come in.

"Oh no! No, thank you!" he replied. "I should be only in the way," he added bitterly to himself; "I have been for a long time."

"Do come in, sir—if only for a moment," went on Devereux, looking up to him.

Satterthwaite could discern nothing of exultation or triumph in his rival's eyes. And the thought flashed upon him that after all, since he was beaten in the game, he had better resign his part with a good grace. So he consented; and they entered the farm-kitchen. Miss Ferrard was sitting in the window, apparently quite at home.

"Oh, we were afraid you had gone." Her eyes met his perfectly unconcernedly. He was astonished.

"Thank you! I was about to go. I thought he might like to rest after his fall, you know."

"Oh, that was nothing. I was fright-

ened though, you know," she added candidly. "I think you were too—you are paler."

Then Devereux ordered the servant to get something to eat. A great piece of cold beef and bread and butter were produced ; and the Ferrards and their host did justice to their repast. Satterthwaite drank some whiskey, but would eat nothing. Helena talked to Devereux, and laughed over the performances of the animals.

"I like Freney best, Jim. I can stick tighter in the old saddle—yours is too new and slippery," she said, turning to Satterthwaite.

He assented mutely, and sat watching her face with a bitter longing. She was sitting in half shadow, for the kitchen window was choked with flowers and bird-cages, and the panes were thick old glass that let in but a greenish, faint light. The projecting black chimney of the fireplace obscured the place too, and Helena was

sitting facing it. The reflection of the few red embers in the grate glistened in her deep, soft eyes, and lighted up the black shining coils of hair she had carelessly twisted up in her comb. Devereux's handsome head looked like a pale cameo beside her.

"They are a well-matched couple, so far as beauty goes," thought Satterthwaite unwillingly ; "she idolises him ; and pride alone ought to make him good to her. Maybe my friend is right ; and it is wrong as well as useless to interfere between them. And yet he is only a farmer, and she a nobleman's daughter, and beautiful as an angel ! How she looked that time on the horse's back !" He leaned his head on his hand for a minute in a fit of half-angry impatience. It seemed so foolish—so unnatural that things should be allowed to go on in this way. He had wealth and position to offer her—merely what was her due and right in the world ; and was the

girl to condemn herself to such a life as this mere boor could give her because an unlucky accident had determined his precedence in the field? He felt half inclined to resist, to make some fresh effort. Something ought to be done to save Miss Ferrard from herself. Then he looked up again. There was Helena talking away in a low, sweet voice, and looking and smiling into her lover's eyes. It was beyond bearing; and Satterthwaite pretended he had forgotten something that had to be posted, and tore off at a fierce gallop that soon left Darraghmore far behind him.

They hardly noticed his departure. Isi started on a ramble through the old house, and left Helena and Devereux sitting together in the kitchen. They did not lack for material for conversation—the doings and prospects of the colt occupied them both fully, and invidious comparisons were instituted between him and Satterthwaite's



beautiful horse. This had lasted nearly an hour when the servant Biddy came running in breathless, and called to Helena :

“ Miss, Davy’s outside—Dirty Davy, ye know ! Cawth has sent him everywhere looking for ye. The lord’s had another stroke, and ye’re to go home at wanst.”

Helena leaped up with an inarticulate cry and seized her hat.

“ Isi, Isi !” she shrieked ; but Isi was too far off to hear. “ Jim, send him home after me by the river road.”

Then away she ran as fast as her feet would carry her, across the pastures. She had not got far after receiving Dirty Davy’s message when she was overtaken by Isi. Jim had found and despatched him after her almost immediately, and she had barely reached the river bank when he came up with her, breathless and panting.

“ Oh Isi, Isi !” she cried, “ let us run, it will take us so long to get back.”

“ Jim told me he’d come down to-morrow

night ; he can't to-night for he has to go up home."

"Very well," she replied.

"And he told me to remind you about Rusty. What am I to do ?"

"Do you or Davy shoot him, or drown him over the bridge when we get in," said Helena, casting a sad look at her favourite who was trotting along beside her, his long thin red tongue hanging pendulously from his mouth and his brown eyes seeking her face for guidance at every turn of the path.

Hel paid him scant attention, though at any other time such an occurrence would have called forth a burst of grief. She strained every nerve to reach home as quickly as possible, and a wild terror lest all should be over with her father ere she reached him lent her additional energy.

At last the bridge was reached. They crossed the piece of waste ground and again climbed down the bank behind the parish

priest's house. A few moments' splashing among the mud and stones brought them to the Mill-house garden. Isi leaped up first and dragged Helena, who was by this time utterly exhausted, after him.

Cawth was standing at the back-door watching for them.

"Bruton's here — I thocht ye'd never come—he can dae naething for him. Sae just come richt in."

He was alive at least, and Helena breathed freely again. She pushed past Cawth and went into the house.

A week passed without any change for better or worse in Lord Darraghmore's condition. Satterthwaite called every day at the Mill-house door to inquire for him, he saw no one but Cawth, whom even golden bribes could not seduce into civility, not to speak of communicativeness. He rode up to Buona Vista one day, feeling more than usually exercised on Helena's account, to inquire from Madam Really if

she had gone as she intended to visit Helena. The servant told him that Madam Really had driven out some twenty minutes before to Rosslyne to visit himself. He rode away as fast as possible to try and overtake her.

Max, the brown pony, must have been in good order that day, for Satterthwaite only came up with madam as she drove up the approach to his own hall-door.

"How do you do?" she cried back to him; "we were playing at hide-and-seek, it seems. I am lucky to find you, even though you are out."

Then they followed the course of the sweep, Madam Really uttering ejaculations of surprise and admiration at the change and improvements she saw. Her clear sharp tones rang above the noise of the wheels and the horses' feet. She seemed to be as usual bright and in good spirits; and Satterthwaite, who had been somewhat dull of late, felt invigorated by

the mere seeing and hearing her. She was delighted with the place, which was looking its best that day. The large bay-windows of the house were open, and under their coloured awnings there was a vision of cool shadow perfumed by the rich-coloured flowers of the majolica boxes and the parterres of the pleasure-grounds. The woods in all the lovely richness of their May foliage resounded with the voices of the birds. The undergrowth and brambles were gone, and here and there an opening made so that through the long aisles of the beeches and firs you got a distant view of the Rack valley winding towards the mountains.

“It’s a paradise!” almost screamed madam as she drew up before the hall-door.

“Glad you like it,” said its owner, flinging his rein to a groom and hastening to help her out. “Come in for a few minutes, then I will take you all round.”

They went into the one sitting-room—the library ; she cast an appreciating glance about her before she sat down in the low chair which he placed for her in the side window.

“Pah ! smoke !” she said, curling up her nose ; “what a desecration ! you men respect nothing. Oh ! what a lovely——”

Her eyes had caught the sloping garden beneath. At the other side of the pond, which lay in clear shadow, was a group of beautiful trees ; a horse-chestnut in full bloom, covered with superb spikes, which looked like snow against the dark background of a copper-beech, whose leaves were fast ripening to a rich brown. Farther back a laburnum, like a gold cascade, dripped brilliant flowerets on the grass. Some of the chestnut blossoms had fallen, and floated on the water, quivering as did the shadowed trunk in its glassy depths.

“Fancy Perry wanting me to drain that

pond, and recommending the slope for potatoes."

"Like him!" said madam, with a chuckle ;  
"has he seen it since you got it in such order ?"

"Oh yes!" replied Satterthwaite. "He was here a week or so ago."

He glanced around with an involuntary smile at the recollection of Perry's performance on that day.

"Isn't he a savage, that character? Anything of this sort," nodding towards the garden, "is simply incomprehensible to these people. If he saw it in England he would admire it and talk about it, but the idea of having such things here would seem ridiculous to him. I can't understand it. They know what is nice—they can appreciate it thoroughly, but they would never imitate it or dream of having it for themselves. They want example, you know. This is the consequence of their being left to themselves, of absenteeism; society is dis-

integrated—disorganised. Look how the Perrys dress; if Lady Comerford were to come here now and again and invite them to an annual ball, give them a glimpse of civilisation, the creatures would have some respect for themselves and conform to modern ideas a little more than they do.”

“ Well,” said Satterthwaite, “ I was going to say they are to be pitied; but they at least do not know what they lose. What I cannot understand is that their manners are so utterly vulgar. Why should that be? Perry is not a Chesterfield, and Mrs. Perry’s comportment leaves much to be desired; but the girls are much worse than both.”

“ You are right, Mr. Satterthwaite; and the rising generation of Roman Catholics all over the country are infinitely less tolerable than their parents. I will prove to you the reason, taking this one place for a type of the rest. The Misses Perry, the



Hollohans, Miss Fair, and some others of the same social class were all educated at the same convent-school, and with them the farmers' daughters, the shopkeepers and petty traders of the district, in fact the two inferior social grades. You can imagine how that amalgamation would result. The inferior class, because it predominated numerically, impressed its stamp upon the others. If you were to talk to Devereux's sister, or any of the shopkeepers' girls in the town, you would find them precisely the same as the Perrys. There is a distinction, but not a tittle of difference between the various classes of Roman Catholics. Professionals and traders are all the same as to manners and culture; and their own obtuseness as to the importance of early association is to blame."

"Roman Catholic society is new. It must be new, for they have only legally existed, so to say, very recently. And since you say the disestablishment removed a means

of culture from them, you ought not to be too hard upon their shortcomings."

"Bah! I'm not. It's their conceit with themselves that I ridicule. They shut their eyes to everything that is æsthetic, that is intellectual. Look at their faces; infallibility is written all over them. If they can play or sing so as to torture every one within earshot, they are 'highly educated;' if they have a drawing-room, or two or three, crammed full of looking-glass and gilding—catch them with pictures or books in their possession!—they are elegance itself; and if they have been presented and have furnished the Castle with matter for ridicule and laughter for a season, they are fit to adorn the peerage forthwith. I give them all credit for their good intentions; and, considering the means at their disposal and the drawbacks that they labour under, they have already accomplished a good deal."

"Assuming that the Protestants in this

country are the exclusive possessors of culture, refinement, etc., do you not think the ecclesiastical prohibition and discouragement of social intercourse has had a certain effect in checking the downward progress of class-improvement?"

"Well, isn't that what I told you before? The disestablishment threw the Protestant party on its own resources. They gathered themselves together, and of course the *narrow*, anti-liberal section in it, finding the spirit of the hour in accordance with and ready to lend itself to their views, showed a hostile front to the Roman Catholics, whose leaders in turn were not slow to seize their opportunity, and, as you know, have been consolidating and advancing their claims ever since. It will take half a century to recover the mischief of that measure."

"I still believe you are mistaken—you must be! How could an Act, proclaimed just and necessary by the whole world,

have brought about a state of things such as you describe?"

"The whole world doesn't know Irish society or the peculiar condition of the people," snapped madam. "This is the mischief of having philosophers for rulers. They fix their eyes on a principle shining somewhere in the distance, and trample over all manner of expediencies and usefulnesses till they haul the thing down and make a present of it to people that never wanted it, and now that they have it find it no manner of use or good, but quite the contrary."

"Come down into my garden—come, Mrs. Really. I want to talk to you about something. We'll come back here when you have seen the improvements I have made."

They went out together and down the broad steps of the hall-door. Satterthwaite felt glad to get out again; he wanted to speak of the Ferrards, and it seemed some-

how easier to talk about Helena in the fresh open garden. It is possible that madam, foreseeing his intention, desired to stave it off as long as possible, for she kept up a constant string of questions and exclamations.

“Japonica—yes; but it won’t flower for you till next spring. The plant will be all the better for it too. You say *improvements*! Yes—I call it a *neues erschaffung*—a creation all over. It is exquisite! The idea of this being made out of that wild slope. Are those the water-lilies you spoke of, coming up?”

They were standing on the top of the terraced slope now.

“Yes,” said Satterthwaite. “There are a few leaves of *nymphæa* showing, but they take a good time to strike. I don’t know whether or not to root out that clump of reeds. From the window it looks well enough, but from the seat it hides the water completely.”

“Leave it,” said madam; “it would look too artificial without it. You see the pond is so small.”

“Yes, it is small. I wish it was large enough for a swan: it would make a pretty sketch. Look at the flowers shadowed in it.”

The tall chestnut with its snowy armour seemed doubled by its reflection in the pool. They could hear the hum of the bees above their heads, and even on the ground they were busy among the fallen blossoms and the sticky brown sheaths of the leaves. Suddenly the shadow was broken by a little waterhen, which ran down from beneath the trees and swam fussily across the pool to her nest among the reeds. The shrill cluck of the little creature broke the stillness, and the shadow-tree in the water moved as though a storm were blowing.

“You would fancy the leaves would be shaken off,” said Mrs. Really, laughing.

“Don’t disturb her. I would rather have that than a swan.”

“Yes ; your taste lies that way,” said he meaningly. He saw an opening now, and was determined to follow it out. “I must say I do not agree with you. No, no—that may be carried too far.”

“Hum ! no amount of training, education, or care would make anything of that wild bird but what she is. She would be perfectly capable of biting the fingers of any one who tried it, either.”

All this was uttered in a tone of lightest persiflage by Madam Really. She had plucked a red oxlip and was twirling it with affected carelessness in her fingers, watching Satterthwaite with eyes that shone like topazes beneath their drooped lids.

He had done nothing since but think of Helena ; and, notwithstanding what he had seen that day at Darraghmore, felt impelled to make one more effort. He persuaded himself that her emotion was natural. The

outcome of mere nervousness. She had some affection for Devereux, that was perhaps excusable, natural, considering how much they had been thrown together. But it seemed to him impossible and wrong that such a union could take place. And now he had a wild hope of being able to enlist Madam Really on his side. It was a last chance; but drowning men catch at straws, and though he had a half-perception that this was but a straw, he intended to try it.

They were passing by a little rustic seat and he stopped, and turning, so as to face her, leaned both hands behind him on the rail and said :

“How is Lord Darraghmore to-day? I could not make up my mind to face that hag again. She looks as if she thought I was coming to steal something, and I want so much to see Miss Ferrard.”

“I don’t think you will see her again,” replied Mrs. Really in a measured cold voice, and taking no notice of his start of



surprise. "Doctor Bruton says the old man cannot last more than twenty-four hours now. I cannot do anything for them. I went, of course, and saw Helena, who seems to be nursing him most devotedly. Poor child ! how pale and worn she looked ! but there is nothing to be done."

"Not now," said Satterthwaite, almost irritably. "I mean, when he is dead."

"I may be wrong, but I believe that the very day the old man is buried will see Hel and Devereux on their way to Canada." And as Mrs. Really finished this she raised her eyelids and looked straight into Satterthwaite's as if defying him.

"Mrs. Really," said he, driven to bay at last, and desperate, "I do not think Devereux a suitable match for Miss Ferrard. I think that girl is fully capable of filling the place in society her birth and beauty entitle her to ; and——"

"And you propose to take this risk,

this charge upon yourself." She finished his sentence for him. "No, no, Mr. Satterthwaite, I think too much of you and of her to stand idly by and see such a folly perpetrated. You do not know the Ferrards. They are not in their present position for nothing, believe me; they have fallen by their own fault. People are like water, they find their own level sooner or later in this world; and if you, my dear sir, were to interfere here between this girl and her lover, you would rue it, and Helena too, the longest day you lived. You talk of educating her. Not a Ferrard that ever lived was susceptible of education. They are splendid animals; make excellent soldiers, as I have seen, but that is all. Believe me, Mr. Satterthwaite, Helena is utterly devoid of intellect. Energy and will she has plenty of like the rest, and Devereux has almost civilised her, but 'so far, and no farther.' You could no more tame her permanently

than you could a gipsy ; take my word for it, and do not wreck your life and hers in a fruitless attempt."

"You ought to know them ; still——"  
He turned away his head with a determined movement.

She looked at his downcast face with a glance that was half pitying, half admiring.

" ' Convince a man against his will, he's of the same opinion still ; ' is that it ? Well, I like your spirit. She is dazzled a little by your superior appearance, your beautiful house, etc. ; but tell me, do you think Hel Ferrard, as she is at this moment, could ever move in your circle in London ? could you present her to your lady friends ? No, Mr. Satterthwaite, do not wrong yourself and her ; don't spoil her life—and she has longer to live than you—leave her to Devereux. She is his first love and he hers. She is a woman and weak, and your refinement and superiority may have momentarily caught her

eye. Perhaps, like all daughters of Eve, she is a coquette. She is beautiful, and she may have thrown you some crumbs of encouragement; but, Mr. Satterthwaite, you are not what I take you to be if you prove yourself now a blind egotist, if you step between these two young creatures."

He did not hear what she was saying. He was plunged in deep thought, and with a pale face walked along beside her. He had never fully realised the position until now, and certainly Madam Really had in no way beaten about the bush in placing the affair before him. She was sincere; that he could not refuse to believe. The whole expression of her face had changed; the tones of her voice were different, and he began to feel a strange, and to him novel, sensation of self-doubt and distrust. What if he should have been wrong after all? If, instead of Helena's good and advancement, he had been seeking his own gratification? Had he not acted

treacherously to Devereux? mere farm lout, boorish rustic as he might be, he was yet a man, and the girl was his promised wife long before he, an interloper, had appeared in the field at all. Madam Really's keen tongue seemed to have stripped every fibre and laid bare every nerve of the affair in glaring black and white. She almost accused him in plain language of seducing Helena's affections wilfully from her betrothed husband. She was a wild creature, no doubt; but what other than a pure object could this woman have in appealing to him against himself as she had done?

They walked back to the house in silence, and re-entered the library. Mrs. Really sat down and looked about her at the well-filled book-shelves, the pictures and china, and the open piano.

"The idea of wanting to add Hel to this collection!" said she to herself; "I could never allow such a thing! The idea

of that wild bird beating her wings in such a gilt cage !”

“The dining-room is not carpeted yet, and I have not decided whether to use the drawing-room as a billiard-room or not,” said Satterthwaite, forcing himself to speak in his customary cheerful, sonorous voice again. He wished now that his visitor would leave him. He wanted to be alone with his thoughts, and madam’s talk somehow began to pall upon him. He wanted to think over all she had been saying, to debate what he was to do. Helena was not to be given up so easily. And he felt a dull sense of discomfort and *malaise*. However, he exerted himself to the utmost to entertain his guest.

“This is the room of all the house to live in,” said she ; “I like your pictures. That is a good Cenci ; what a difficult expression it is to catch—that of the mouth, I mean. I have only one or two pictures. My husband bought me all those engravings

you saw, while I was away at Buxton, for my neuralgia, and there the things were hanging when I came back. He wanted to surprise me——”

“Look at this, please,” said Satterthwaite, walking over to the window with a small painting, done on a piece of board, in his hands. She rose, and placing herself in the proper light looked at it long and earnestly.

It was a study of an Hungarian peasant girl. A singularly wild, beautiful face, sibyl-like and weird, with great terrified blue eyes. Dark curls were blown sideways, and floated like a veil from her head. The soft-lipped but determined mouth seemed parting for speech. It was not a child's face, neither was it a woman's. And yet it had a fire and character of its own—one of those unforgettable expressions that, when a real painter catches and fixes it, lives longer in our memories than the mere living face.

"Dear ! how like," she cried, "it is—"

"Yes, is it not ? The brow here is narrower though, than Helen—" Satterthwaite stopped suddenly, and placing the little picture—it was not more than a foot square—on a velvet bracket, near the window, stood back and scrutinised it searchingly. After a moment or two he seated himself opposite to her, and in a business-like indifferent tone asked :

"Where will Devereux get the money to take them to Canada, and to establish them there ?"

"He has some money of course—people like him have always money. I should not be surprised if he had five or six hundred of his own ; that is, provided his father allows him to keep the farm produce ; if it is otherwise I cannot tell."

Satterthwaite stared thoughtfully out of the window, pulling the end of his moustache.

"I never asked you to take anything.



"I insist you do not go until I get you something."

Mrs. Really had risen and asked for her carriage. He rang the bell hurriedly.

"No, no! I shall be back to lunch. Now, Mr. Satterthwaite, when are you to be in Darraghstown again? I hope," she added, "that you will think seriously of what I said. Don't think me impertinent or interfering, pray. I know I am incurring a risk."

She was going down the steps now. Satterthwaite handed her the reins, and shook hands with her cordially, ignoring her last speech save for a smile. Then she shook the reins, and the pony started off down the sweep. Satterthwaite remained standing on his hall-door steps, and watched the little phaeton circle the lawn among the trees. The crackling of the gravel ceased at last, the gates swung to with a crash behind it. For a few moments he could hear the trot of the pony going down

the lane. Then all was still again; the cawing of the rooks and the soft murmur of the young leaves alone disturbed the stillness of the sweet spring day.

He remained still for a few minutes, then walked absently into the wood by the path that skirted the pleasure-ground; it was the same route that he had come with the Ferrards the day they were shooting in the wood, and Satterthwaite began to pace it up and down moodily. He never dreamed he could have felt anything of the kind so much; and he could not explain to himself how the feeling had grown upon him. He remembered the first time he saw Helena, in the Perrys' house; he had been interested in her, of course; who would not have been? Then the day they met at Darraghmore, and explored the old house together. So far from encouraging, she had avoided him; certainly he had no complaint against the girl on that score. Then came the day in

the woods. That handsome Devereux had had the start of him—that was all, he told himself, gnawing his moustache. But the fellow had his rights too; and even if Helena were inclined—"inclined to," he repeated, with a bitter laugh, "after what I saw that day at Darraghmore? No! she idolises him. If she consented to marry me, it will be, as my friend hints, for my house and horses. No, no! Devereux is her first love, and she his. I'm a fool!"

He had leaned his back against a pine-tree, and was looking away up a long green aisle in the woods. A scented wind swept lightly down the long open, shaking the catkins of the pines and rudely kissing the wood-primroses. The honey sweet of the furze blossoms on the mountains hung upon it yet, and Satterthwaite removed his hat and let it play upon his burning forehead; for a minute only; then he turned towards the house, walking quickly.

“I’ll go back to London,” said he to himself; “things here are sufficiently in train for me to leave them for a month or so; and first to see what I can do for my friends at Darraghmore.”

He went into the library, and unlocking his desk, spent a few minutes searching among his papers. Then he came out with his whip in his hand, and shouted an order to a man who was raking the gravel before the coach-house door. In a few minutes Black Auster, saddled and bridled, was led round; his master mounted and rode away.

It was between three and four in the afternoon. The trees began to throw long shadows across the dusty road, and the distant Galtees lay bathed in a pale gold colour, as Mr. Satterthwaite trotted his black horse up to the old entrance of Darraghmore. The grass on the deserted drive was rank and long, and tall nettles and docks were springing up at the side;

the cows were browsing almost knee-deep in the rich pasture ; and young Devereux, their owner, sitting on a broken granite pillar by the edge of the old steps, was engaged in mending a whip, the leather of which was all unplaited. He had thrown off his coat for coolness' sake, and, tired after a morning's hard work with his colt, was now taking his ease. He did not see the approaching equestrian until he was close upon him, for the horse's hoofs made hardly any sound in the soft grass.

“ Good-day, Mr. Devereux !” said Satterthwaite, pulling up. “ You are surprised to see me. I shan't keep you long, though. You were telling me you intended selling your colt, eh ?”

Devereux opened his blue eyes, and looked at him in astonishment, and a crowd of fancies rushed into his brain, crowding on top of each other. The colt had been a sore thought to him for some

time back. How was he to go to Canada without disposing of it in some way? He could leave him, like the rest of the stock and chattels—the cows and pigs, and the well-plenished dairy; but it was a hard thing for him, when he had reared and trained the animal, to turn his back and let some one else step in—even though it was his own father—and take all the credit and gains away from him. To dispose of him by private sale was not a thing to be done in the twinkling of an eye, and a couple or so of days was all the time he had now. Could it be that the Englishman wanted to buy him? His face flushed up, and he answered, stammering:

“I—I’d sell him—yes.”

“Well, Mr. Devereux,” said Satterthwaite, speaking in a dry hard voice, “you said, if I recollect rightly, that you expected to get eighty or so pounds for him at Ballinasloe; that’s six months off; and, taking into account his keep and so

forth till then, will you take seventy-five for him now ?”

Satterthwaite, in his first generous impulse, had intended to offer a hundred for the horse, but on reflection he concluded to put on at least the appearance of driving a fair bargain.

“Seventy-five—I’d have given him to you, sir, for fifty. When will you have him sent home ?”

“Any time,” said Satterthwaite absently. “This evening, or to-morrow—when you like ; and I will leave you these notes now ; I chanced to have Bank of England notes for the amount or near it.”

He put his hand in his pocket as he spoke, to take out his *portemonnaie*. Devereux was standing near the black horse’s shoulder ; his eyes were turned in bewilderment away towards the open field, and the oblique rays of the declining sun gilded his crest of yellow curls like a glory, and shone in his soft blue eyes. Satter-

thwaite counted the notes mechanically, then handed them to the young fellow with a somewhat dreary smile. He was no longer at the white heat of self-sacrificing resolve, and Helena's face and eyes, as he saw them when he lifted her off the horse, seemed to float with mocking persistency before his own. He held out the clean grey notes with a slow grudging feeling, and for a moment a terrible sensation of envy and disappointment, mixed with indignation, took possession of him. Devereux, who seemed too surprised even to thank him, took the money and began to count it slowly, reading the signature on each bank note and turning them over deliberately.

"Well," said Satterthwaite at last, "is it right?"

"Yes," replied the young fellow, stuffing the bundle into his pocket. "I'm greatly obliged to you, sir. I'll have him



up to-night to your man Jenkins, for I'll have a deal to do these next few days."

These last words were uttered rather more to himself than to Satterthwaite, who was looking at him in an earnest abstracted sort of way as if he thought of something he would like to say, but could not. They remained standing thus awkwardly together, neither speaking. At last Satterthwaite drew up his reins to go. "Good-bye," said he curtly, and with one more glance at the young fellow, he turned his horse and rode back to the gate entrance. As he took the course to the left, on to the Tobergeen Road, he looked back once more at the old house of Daraghmore. The nettle-grown carriage-drive wound away to the front, which lay in clear grey shadow now, for the sun had got round to the west. The swallows were flying in and out the empty windows, and he could see the tall climbing rose, the flowers of which he had aided Helena to

gather. The cows were all standing at the yard-door lowing to be milked, and above the deep musical sound rose the cawing of the rooks in the trees. Satterthwaite drew a deep sigh as he looked. "One could live contentedly enough like that," said he to himself. "What can a man want more?" He was thinking of the man whom he had left standing in the field, amazed and happy—not of himself, to whose felicity he now deemed an important ingredient lacking.

He rode on between hedgerows, out of whose tangled green, pale stars of wild honeysuckle were shining. Their ethereal perfume was lost in the strong bitter sweet of the hawthorn. Tall dusty nettles bordered the ditches, and hid the fern leaves and one or two late-staying primroses. A little running stream bubbled and muttered below, and from the distant woods came the cuckoos' and the thrushes' even-song. After a long ride he rounded the

slope of Tobergeen, and a sudden whim took him to climb the hill and make some excuse to get sight of the old Devereux. So he passed through the white wooden gate, hospitably open, and on up the rugged lane between two wild hedges, where alder blossoms and hawthorns, sweetbriar and wild honeysuckle united in one lush bouquet, and out of which the thrushes flew with a wild alarm-note at the clatter of the now tired horse among the stones. At last they reached the top, and stood before the door of the old farmhouse. A man presented himself at it suddenly, calling hurriedly almost before he appeared :

“Jim—is it you, Jim?”

“No,” replied Satterthwaite ; “it is I, Mr. Satterthwaite of Rosslyne ; and will you be good enough to give my horse a drink of gruel ? He is tired, and I have a good piece to go.”

“Certainly, sir. Con, Con !” he called.

"Come in, sir, and sit down. Do, if you please. I thought it was Freney's foot, with my son from Darraghmore."

"Freney is not unlike my horse," said Satterthwaite, swinging himself down. "I won't go in, thank you. I never touch whiskey, either. No, much obliged. Yes, Freney's a fine brute."

"Ah!" returned the farmer in an exulting tone, "Jim has a wonderful hand with a horse. I never saw anything like the way he can manage beasts. He'd tame anything."

Satterthwaite smiled bitterly at this encomium. "What if I were to tell him that his son had sold me the colt? That would play the deuce with his new project. No, no, that would not answer."

Then Jim's mother came out — an amiable, mild-eyed woman—pretty still, but timid and anxious-looking, and joined her entreaties to those of her husband. Satterthwaite refused, and mounting the

refreshed Auster, wished the couple a pleasant good-night, and began to re-descend the hill.

The two old people stood looking after him.

“Do you know what,” said Devereux, turning to his wife, “I’d never be surprised he’d buy the colt, he speaks that warm about it. He’s terrible rich. To see the drains, and buildings, and gardens he has there at Rosslyne—’tis wonderful, I’m told.”

“Maybe he would then after all! These English are so rich.”

“Ay, and don’t know what to do with it. They’re all quare—I never met one of ’em was like other people. Look at that jobber came here last October with Jim O’Brien; he’d drink straight on till he’d fall, an’ then to sleep with him like a log.”

“I don’t know but what it was a peaceabler way, then,” said the wife in a dubious tone, as if not unwilling to allow that this especial phase of English

“quareness” was not without its redeeming feature in her eyes.

The horseman was out of sight now, so they went back to the house.

Satterthwaite held his way down the lane slowly. The view of the valley was beautiful. The grey and purple of the barren tracts that alternated with the chessboard-like squares of green corn and meadow on the mountain-side were varied here and there by a gold fleck of furze-bloom on the white wall of some mountain shieling, and the river ran still and white between its two pebble-strewn banks.

Once down on the road, he took the Darraghstown direction at a quick trot; he wanted to hear how Lord Darraghmore was, and to see Perry on some business. The demesne wall of Comerford was soon reached, and in the shadow of the great overhanging chestnuts he slacked his rein again. He was wondering how it was with Helena in the sick-room at the Mill-

house. "How white and worn she looked." Mrs. Really's words that morning came back to him. Poor Hel ! poor child ! He would have given the world to have been able to assist and console her. Then he fell into a half-melancholy reverie, and letting the reins fall on the horse's neck left him to take his own way. The honey-laden blossoms were dropping from the boughs, and the road was carpeted in pink and white. The bees were still at work, and a sweet drowsy hum filled the air. The low of the cattle across the Rack came over the open water with a distant home-like sound, and he could hear a girl's fresh voice lilting some old tune as she returned with her milk-pails from the field. Little by little the sun was sinking to the western edge of the horizon. The tops of the trees were bathed yet in a pale gold light. A red mist was gathering round the eagle-haunted peaks of the Galtees, and their sharp

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profiles showed more and more distinct and black. The red deepened to crimson, then purple shading into a pale yellowish mist, in which here and there a tiny sparklet was visible. Soon he had crossed the bridge and rode down to the Perrys' door. Two dusky figures were standing on the pavement before it. Perry and old Doctor Bruton.

"Hillo, Mr. Satterthwaite!" cried Perry in his big loud voice; "how are you? Bruton, our new neighbour from Rosslyne."

"I am told," began Satterthwaite, "that Lord Darraghmore is dying."

"Sinking fast," said the old doctor, a queer lean old man, with a figure and face like the presentments of Don Quixote, dressed in an old black dress-coat, and with a great satin stock that came up to his chin. "He cannot last till morning."

Satterthwaite cast a lingering look at the gloomy old house as he turned to ride off.



How were things going on there? he wondered to himself.

"I'll send in to-morrow to know how he is."

"Humph!" said Perry, "I'll let you know about that. I dare say," he added in a lower tone, "you'd like to attend the funeral?"

"Yes. Where could we get a carriage?"

"Why, they'll all walk. Sure it's only up there on the slope. Yes—I'll tell you to-morrow."

There was some impropriety in discussing these details while the poor old man was yet alive, and Satterthwaite was moving on in order to put a stop to the conversation.

"Very well—good-night. Good-night, doctor," he replied over his shoulder.



## CHAPTER V.

“Und der Tod ist unser Arzt. Ach! ich will nichts Böses von ihm reden, und nicht Andre in ihrem Vertrauen stören; denn da er der einzige Arzt ist, so mögen Sie immerhin glauben er sei auch der Beste, und das einzige Mittel, das er anwendet, seine ewige Erdkur, sei auch der Beste.”—HEINE.

“But religion, they tell us, ought not to be ridiculed, and they tell us truth, yet surely the corruptions may; for we are taught by the tritest maxim in the world that religion being the best of things, its corruptions are likely to be the worst.”—SWIFT.



DOCTOR BRUTON was right; his patient died just eleven hours after he had spoken to Mr. Satterthwaite, and foretold the time the old lord had to live.

The Mill-house was darkened, and a

bunch of crape hung on the door. The wolf-dog was walking up and down the deserted parlour, whining and scratching at the door of that inner room where his master was lying, alone and in the dark. The parlour had been swept and garnished in some rude sort. The windows were closed and the curtains drawn, but a stray sunbeam came in through a chink and lighted up the bleared eyes of the old dog, and a whole evensong of thrushes and blackbirds poured in the broken panes, so as almost to drown his piteous moans. The dead man in the little back room, with the sheet drawn over his worn white face, had heard the birds that morning, when in the first flush of dawn he had waked out of the sleep which was indeed but a sort of prelude to the great sleep which soon after overtook him. But now the sunlight and the birds were closing the day together merrily, a day which for the poor old man had never closed, hardly begun, at all.

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Pale-faced Helena, sitting all night beside him, had given him a drink, and smoothed the pillow, and he looked at her once—she often thought of it afterwards—then stretched down his weary limbs, and closed his eyes again—for good and all this time.

So now the door was locked and the curtains drawn, and there he would lie till the time should come to take him to the Abbey churchyard. Had he been a Catholic things would have been differently ordered. There would have been wax candles lighting night and day, and watchers praying, and the house would have been open to all who chose to come and pay their last respects to him in that odd—savage if you will—but intensely human Irish fashion, according to which all joys and sorrows are common property. Irish human nature, wishing rather to take cheerful views of things, has contrived to suppress the element of grief as much as possible, in many cases to put it out of sight altogether.

Helena however determined to uphold the colder tradition of her own class, which indeed seemed to her just now not only more decent, but more convenient.

The townsfolk were in some sort of commotion over the event. A good many, even of those to whom he owed money, shut up their shop windows, nearly all drank something extra, and there was much talking and comparing notes with the good old time when this man's father was "waking," and two hogsheads of whiskey were drunk by his sympathising adherents. There was no "giving out" on this occasion. Dirty Davy had reported that Miss Helena had barred the doors with her own hands, and dared him or Cawth open them to anybody, and added the astounding, incredible news that there was not a drop of whiskey in the Mill-house. A death in Darraghstown and no whiskey, no wake ! It was unaccountable. The bridge was thronged with malcontents all day, and some walked in couples

past the door, casting curious glances at the front of the house. The ill deeds of the Ferrards was the chief theme of their talk. Later on Davy bruited it abroad that Miss Hel had got money, from England, and meant to pay all that was owing in the town; whereupon a sort of revulsion of feeling took place. Some more shops closed their shutters. The antiquity of the family was remembered, and Miss Hel's beauty and breeding descanted upon. The inherent and ineradicable virtues of rare owld blood and owld stock occupied their minds and tongues; and Mr. Satterthwaite, from Rosslyne, who rode up to the post-office in the afternoon to post his letters, could hardly get anybody to hold his horse. A few women ventured to the yard-door on some officious kindness ostensibly, but Cawth reconnoitred them cautiously from a hole in the wall, and sent them coldly about their business.

Char was in his own room writing letters. One must be sent to his step-

brother Claud, of the Imperial Hussars, at Vienna; one to Bath, to his aunts; to San Francisco, to another stepbrother supposed to be there, but shot in a brawl nearly a year before. Clanrickarde was also at Vienna, and Claud, now Lord Darraghmore, would inform him of their father's death. For that matter Char could do it in person, for he expected to be in Vienna himself ere the week was out; he would not be sorry for that, for, after all, Darraghstown was a stupid hole, and since this wretched Englishman had come more unbearable than ever. Then he dropped the pen and ran his hands through his curly black hair, yawning at his ease. Writing letters was not to his taste, and, moreover, something had occurred that afternoon that had discomposed him seriously. Hel had got all the money in her possession—she always kept the money nowadays, since Clan's departure—and had said she intended paying the family debts in the

town. So Cawth in mingled rage and grief had informed him, and this too when they were going to leave the place for ever and wanted the money so badly. Char concluded that Hel must be mad; there was no other way of accounting for that sort of nonsense. She had eighty pounds, and their aunts in Bath had sent a cheque for fifty, one hundred and thirty pounds, and she wanted to waste such potentialities of luxury. He would not allow her to do it. So he told Cawth, and confirming his resolution with a vigorous oath he jumped up from the table and followed her downstairs. Cawth walked on hopefully before him—she could not understand Helena's mood—and led the way into the kitchen, where the two younger members of the family were sitting together.

The evening was warm out of doors, but the old house was damp and dark. Helena, chilled and dispirited, was crouching over a tiny peat fire on the hearth, holding out



her hands over the dull-red glare, partly to warm them and partly to keep the light out of her eyes, sore with crying and with want of sleep. Isi stood beside her, with his back against the wall and his arms folded, looking at her thoughtfully.

When the kitchen-door opened and Cawth appeared, Char tramping heavily behind her, Helena looked round a moment, then resumed her pose apathetically. Isi raised his head and looked defiantly at Char, his dark brow frowning, his eyes sparkling and angry. Neither of the defensive party spoke. Cawth finished rattling among some of her cooking-gear in the corner, and flung herself on a chair with a groan of rage.

“Ma word, but we’s a’ to turn oot and beg for Miss Ferrard’s airs; giv’ a’ the money to they fules! I’ll ha’ my wage. I’d warran’ ye years and years of wages; it’s no the workhouse I’d be facin’ noo if I’d taken my ain siller lang——”

Char cut her short.

“You’ll give me fifty of that money. I’ll have my share. Do you hear, Hel? It’s I who have a right to it, and not you.” Char blustered and stamped.

Helena had folded her hands in her lap, and, without even looking at him, was blankly impassive. Isi stood forward a little, his fists clenched.

“I say you must hand it over,” vociferated Char. “I will make you; see if I don’t! and you, you pup” (this was to Isi), “interfere if you dare!” He caught Helena’s arm as he spoke, and was swinging her off her seat, but Isi was too quick and jumped at him, striking down his arm with a quick hard blow. Char was a bully, and a coward like most bullies, but he was in a fury, and the two boys were grappling with each other directly. Helena caught Char’s arms from behind his back and held him. In obedience to a glance from her, Isi drew back, his lip set, however, deter-

minedly, and watching his opponent's eye.

"Listen," said Helena in a distinct hard tone. "I have not got the money here. Jim Devereux is keeping it for me, and you dare not take it from him. I shall pay every farthing we owe in the town; and, Cawth, I'll punish you if you dare to speak of it again as you have now. I'll punish you, do you hear?"

Cawth, who had advanced, and was beginning to utter a fresh volley of insolence, shrunk from the fiery glance the girl shot at her, and sat down again appalled. Helena turned again to Char.

"You shall get your share, and so shall Isi, of whatever is left—not a penny more; and if you say more now you shall not have anything at all. You can't make me give it to you."

Char's eyes fell before hers, and he quailed at the threat, which he well knew she would and could put into execution.


He muttered and grumbled below his breath, and slouched across the kitchen to a dark corner, where he sat down and brooded in dumb sullenness. Cawth lifted up her voice and wept aloud. She hoped to soften her ruler by this means, but she was mistaken. Helena remained for some ten minutes or so stolidly impassive, then abruptly ordered the old woman to prepare supper. She obeyed sulkily, and they partook of the meal together in unbroken silence. Helena eat scarcely anything. The excitement had passed away, leaving her weary and crushed in body and mind. The supper over, the two boys went upstairs to smoke or sleep as they inclined, and Helena returned to the creepy stool before the hearth. Cawth, who was watching her stealthily, proposed to make tea; it was peace-overture, and was accepted as such, and the old woman and she sat in the half dark, and drank the tea together.

“Perry sent in word he had settled every-

thing—the funeral, ye know—that time ye war asleep. 'Twill be on Wednesday ; an' Mrs. Really brought the message. She wanted to see ye badly, and asked if ye'd let her in the morn."

"What does she want?" said Helena wearily. "I'll speak to Jim about it."

Then she laid aside her cup and saucer, and resting her elbows on her lap, leaned her aching head on her hands, and remained a long time without speaking or stirring. She could not go to bed, for she had to wait to see Jim Devereux, who was to come in by the river-road and the back gardens of the houses, so as not to be seen from the road, to arrange some matters with her. She was worn out and exhausted, and before long her head drooped lower and lower, and at last in that uneasy posture she fell asleep. She had not been so long when the back-door opened noiselessly, and the young farmer entered. He cast a rapid glance round. There was no



one but Cawth dozing in an old arm-chair she had fetched out of the sitting-room. He stepped lightly across the floor and seated himself in a vacant chair beside the sleeping girl, and without waking her, remained a while looking at her pityingly. Then seeing by her fitful starts and moans that she was uneasy, he half lifted her up, half drew her, as softly and gently as if she were an infant, till her head rested against him. Her face was upturned now to his, and the firelight fell upon it, showing the paleness of her cheek, on which the long eyelashes rested in dark contrast. A lock of tangled dark hair had fallen over her brow ; he stroked it back with rough but reverent fingers tenderly. For more than an hour Helena rested, guarded thus. At last he looked at his watch, and deemed it necessary to awake his charge.

She started and stood up.

“ Oh Jim, why did you let me sleep so ? It must be awfully late. Oh dear ! how

tired and dazed I am ! And I was dreaming——”

Then poor Helena sat down again suddenly, and burst out crying and sobbing. He took her hands in his, and stroked and pressed them ; still she did not cease. He knelt down beside her, and put one arm round her and drew her closer, and leaned his cheek on hers till she stopped, soothed and quieted like a child.

“ What ails ye, my bird Hel, eh, what ? Was it Char ? ”

“ Oh no ; that’s done now. That was nothing.”

Then she drew away from him, and he sat down again, watching her gravely.

“ No,” she continued, “ it wasn’t that, it’s everything together, I think,” and she sighed, and her lip quivered.

“ Listen ! ” said Jim ; “ imagine Satterthwaite coming down and buying Freney from me. He did, and I’ve the money at home—seventy-five pounds.”

Helena turned round suddenly, staring at him with bewildered eyes.

"Satterthwaite!" she repeated, flushing suddenly, "he bought the horse?"

"Bought and paid for him, and he's home in Rosslyne stables now."

"Ah, Jim," cried she effusively, "he is a good fellow. I always knew it."

"Yes, if he had prosecuted Char that time, where would we be now?"

Helena did not reply. She had rested her aching head in her hand, and was looking into the fire in a sort of dream. It was to her so wonderful that, just now, Satterthwaite should have performed this second act of beneficence. How good he must be, and how amiable! She remembered the day in the wood, his care of and courtesy to her, both of them a new experience to Helena. She had his book too that he had given her upstairs; this time it was carefully laid aside among her most valued possessions. Then, too, in a



mist of doubt and regret there rose before her his face and the words he had said when he lifted her off his beautiful horse that day they were at Darraghmore together. But Jim Devereux pulled down her hand, and made her look at him.

“Ah, Hel!” said he with a sigh, “I wish this was all over. I was up at Tobergeen, and we had a dreadful row. It’s all Father Quaide’s doings, but for him things would go all right; but he’s so anxious about that fifty pounds. I declare I don’t know what he wants with all this money. Look at Mrs. Dwyer’s funeral; I gave them a pound then—and, faith, I’m sorry for it now.”

“You did! to whom did you pay it?”

“Augh! when it was all over, and we were going away, there was a table in the hall with a cloth and a lighted candle, and Dwyer sitting at one side and two of his children at the other, to take the money for the priests. It was enough to make

one sick to see them. However, every one gave, and I'm told that they made their forty-five pounds. I can't understand them preaching about purgatory and the tortures of it, and they won't say a mass for a creature's soul till they are paid first."

"He wouldn't marry us, then?" said Helena.

"No, nor any priest in Ireland; we'll just make the journey. Satterthwaite's money will take us over well, and we needn't break the three hundred pounds. So I'm ready for the road. Isi and you and I will get along first rate—eh, Hel?"

He stooped towards her, leaning his hand on her shoulder, and looked with his bright confident glance into her dimmed tear-stained eyes.

Hel looked up at him, a faint smile for a moment flickered on her lips, to be followed by a sigh however.

"You are not afraid, are you? Hel, are you as true as I am?" he held out his

hand to her, and she laid hers, now warm and trembling, in it. There was a silence, broken only by their breathing, for a while. Then he spoke :

“ I’ll be round to-morrow night if I can. There’s no use setting them talking. Do you want any money before Wednesday ?”

“ No,” said Hel firmly. “ I’ll want it all on Wednesday, though, to pay the bills and give Char his share.”

“ Ay, that’s right, Hel; leave them nothing to say against you—pay every one of them.”

Helena’s face lighted up and flushed a little at this expression of his will. She said nothing, however ; only glanced at him meaningly.

“ Well, I must go ; I’ve plenty to do. I wanted to say to you if I don’t get down to-morrow, the funeral will be at eight, in the Abbey burial-ground. Is that so ?”

“ Yes, Perry settled it so. Are you going home by the river-walk ?”

“ Yes, of course ; the quieter the better now ; come down as far as the garden wall with me.”

Helena got up and followed him out of the back-door, and down the narrow path leading to the wall. It was late now, nearly ten o'clock ; the twilight was gone, and a mild summer's night, balmy and soft, reigned in its stead. Helena felt it warmer in the open air than in the damp old kitchen, and without knowing why, she felt suddenly almost happy. They were out of the black shadows of the old house now. The river stretched away before them, winding in a broad silver band between the waving banks of reeds. Above, the stars shone through a warm luminous haze. There was no moon, yet it was clear and soft, and a tiny breeze, scented with yellow whin bloom that seemed to follow the Darragh in its course from the mountains, lifted and stirred the little loose tresses on her temples. There was not a sound but the running

murmur of the water, and the soft rustle of the new-leaved branches as the night wind passed through them.

“I wonder will it be like this in Canada, Jim?” said Helena dreamily. One fortnight more—imagine it.”

“I don’t care what it will be like,” answered he. “You and I will be there together, and that’s enough for me.”

She was looking up at the sky, counting the seven white stars of the Plough, in a sort of dreamy languor. At his words she turned her face towards him and smiled. All the beauty of the sky and earth seemed reflected in it at that moment.

“Good-night, my jewel,” said he slowly. “Go in now—I don’t want you to be seen.”

She turned obediently to go, but he stretched out his arm, and drawing round her face, kissed her cheek and pressed it one moment to his; then lightly leaped the wall and was gone.



## CHAPTER VI.



ELENA was in her own room sorting and preparing her miscellaneous stores for the packing-boxes which encumbered the floor. An old leather valise was full already, and she was making strenuous efforts to make the hasp meet and catch in the lock. It would not shut down; the leather cover refused obstinately to yield to pulling or pressing. Hel even sat on the top, but the cover only bent in with her weight, and the hasp was farther from its place than ever. So

she jumped off impatiently, and sat down in the window in her accustomed place. She was tired with her efforts, and drew a long breath as she leaned back and curled up her feet in her favourite attitude to rest herself. It was warm in the room, besides. The sun beat on the slates and on the attic windows, and there was very little air stirring. There was no blind on the side window, and it was half open. The swallows and the swifts darting by in the sunshine cast sudden fleeting shadows on the floor. Everything was still and quiet; the faintest possible ripple was borne upward from the river, and a few old men lying on the bridge wall seemed overcome with sleep.

The street was silent and deserted, and the blue turf-smoke from the little moss-grown cabins shimmered like gossamer-threads in the sun. Tiny white clouds floated high up in the clear limpid azure.

In the fields just before her a lark had risen, and was singing its sweetest and strongest, beating the air with its wings. It looked no bigger than a bee, Helena thought, as she followed it with her eyes, and watched it till it dropped weary to the grass again. Then all was once more mute. Even the geese crouched languidly in the sunniest places on the sloping bank of the river, and preened their feathers at their ease. Helena sat still for a good time in her chair, twisting her long fingers thoughtfully. At last a bell roused her from her reverie. It was the twelve o'clock Angelus ringing from the convent. She jumped up quickly, for she remembered suddenly all she had to do. Stepping over the litter of books and clothes to the toilet-glass, she seized her long plaits of hair, which were loosely wreathed round her head, and began to untwist them. The thick locks soon hung loose on her shoulders, forming a



strange frame for her pale face. In a few minutes she had plaited and coiled it again, and stood for one moment looking at her own reflection in the little mirror. The fine straight brows were now no longer sullen or overhanging, and the beautiful half-melancholy, half-thoughtful eyes were clearer and more serene of look. The skin, pallid but soft and fine as an infant's, was like ivory in contrast with the surrounding mass of hair, and her ears looked like little white shells among the tiny rebellious curls which broke loose from their restraints to caress them. Helena put up an impatient finger to push them back, but started round on seeing Cawth's wrinkled visage, looking now twenty years older, mirrored beside her own in the glass.

“Here's Mrs. Really below. She says she will na go till she sees ye.”

Helena threw back her head with an impatient gesture, and set leisurely about

finishing her toilet. She poured out a basin of water, and plunged her hands in it. They were hot and tired, and she splashed them to and fro in the cool water. Cawth waited humbly.

“Show her in,” said Hel at last. “I’ll come down and see what she wants.”

Then she threw down the towel, and began to speculate as to what madam could be wanting her for. The other day she had been again, asking to be allowed to do something, and when refused, had said she would come back. Perhaps Mr. Satterthwaite had sent her. If that was so, Hel certainly would go to her. She seemed to be a friend of his, so on that account she should be spoken with at least. Then she crossed the room, and opening the drawer of a queer little old escritoire, took out of it Satterthwaite’s pocket Shakespeare. She looked at it, and laid it back again. Helena intended to keep that book always. Then

she took out a tiny packet of silver paper, much crumpled, and a little dirty. She unrolled it by degrees, and then laid the enclosure in the palm of her hand, turning and looking at it almost reverently. It was a gold ring, a thick circlet of frosted gold. Helena slipped it on her long white finger, and holding her hand a little way from her, looked at it again. A long thin ray of sunlight had crept through the shutters of the front window, and as it fell on the outstretched hand, the new gold frosting glittered and shone like particles of diamonds. She smiled, and gave her head a little determined shake, then hastily pulled off the ring, and folding it up in the silver paper again, turned away and down the stairs. She passed Char's room and looked in. He was lying on his bed smoking, his saturnine countenance turned so that he could look out of the window, which commanded a view of the river and bridge. He too had been making pre-

parations for his departure. His double-barrel gun had been taken to pieces, and was lying on a table, and the floor of the room was littered with miscellaneous property, scattered about in the process of selection. Helena said nothing. The tobacco smoke made her cough, and she pulled the door impatiently to, and ran down the stair.

Cawth was standing in the hall, and signed to her to go into the parlour. Helena stood one second on the mat, and pressed her hands to her temples. Then she opened the door wide, and walked in with head erect to meet her visitor.

Madam Really, when she told Mr. Satterthwaite that she had seen Helena, had given him, perhaps unconsciously, to understand that she had paid the girl a friendly visit. In reality, she had been admitted for a few minutes to the hall, where she exchanged a few words with Helena, who, indeed, had far too much on

her mind to be willing to endure the well-meant officiousness of the elder lady. Helena had never been accustomed to receive attentions or civilities from people of Madam Really's class. She had a sort of dread and dislike of strangers, springing chiefly from a morbid sense of her own anomalous position, but resulting also from the unsocial habits in which she had been trained. However, Satterthwaite's friendship for madam was a protecting ægis. But for it she would have been driven off as heretofore, with something more than incivility.

Madam, however, had no suspicion of the cause of her unwontedly civil reception. She set it down to the score of the improvements which Devereux's influence had effected in Helena, and added it also mentally to the sum of self-gratulation at her own wise selection and well-planned manœuvres. She identified herself, as people will, with the success of her *protégé*,

Jim, and took much credit to herself on this account, and sat quietly in the dark parlour waiting for her appearance, and inwardly praying that it might not be long delayed. There was an indescribable odour in the room—the damp that always is in ground-floor chambers, the smell of the tobacco-soaked curtains, and the mouldering furniture all mingled horribly together, and though the windows were open, nearly stifled her. The sofa was wheeled away from the fireplace, and on it lay the old man's inseparable companion, his faithful wolf-dog. She went over and looked at him; then held out her hand to caress him. He snapped at her feebly with a cross snarl. A plate of food lay on the floor untouched. She picked her way back to the window over the rags of carpet on the floor, and sat down again, wondering how long Miss Helena meant to keep her, and wishing her vinaigrette had not been forgotten in the phaeton.

Then she heard the quick springing step on the stair. The door opened, and Helena walked in, looking at her questioningly and distantly, but not defiantly.

Madam Really was almost taken aback. Hel seemed to have grown taller. Her long black dress fell gracefully round her slim, well-poised figure, and her face only looked more beautiful for the fatigue and paleness it showed.

"How do you do to-day?" said Mrs. Really in a sympathetic voice, holding out her hand. "Are you rested? I hope you have not been ill."

She continued to hold the girl's hand in hers, waiting for an answer.

Helena withdrew her hand, answering composedly that she was quite well. She looked fixedly at madam with her great eyes, somewhat tear-stained, but brilliant and deep.

"Sit down, dear; I want to speak to

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you—to ask you to let me do something for you.”

Helena sat down, frowning a little, but patient and dignified.

“First of all, my dear child,” began Mrs. Really. “I want you not to look on me as a mere stranger interfering in your affairs. I was at one time a great friend of your step-brother Claud, now Lord Darraghmore.” She paused to see the effect of her words.

Helena’s eyes had kindled with a sudden interest at the mention of Claud, but they wavered and filled with tears at the words “now Lord Darraghmore;” her head drooped a little, and the hard set look left her face. Mrs. Really was touched—infinitely more touched than she had expected to be—and it was in a more feeling tone that she continued.

“Yes, my dear,” she said in a gentle voice that called up in poor Helena an odd remembrance of her aunt Elizabeth



in Bath, "it is so. You won't look upon me as a stranger, then, and you will believe that I am really interested in you—is that agreed, now?" She took the girl's hand in hers; it remained passive enough in her grasp, but the head was turned aside and her eyes averted. Mrs. Really went on :

"I know your circumstances well, and believe me, I am really interested in you—willing to help you, too, if you will let me. You are no more than a child yet, dear Miss—dear Helena."

Helena sighed and moved uneasily in her chair. Then she looked at Mrs. Really, and said in a hurried but gentle tone :

"Well?"

"I have been thinking," said she, "that it will be so difficult for you to get everything arranged, and you are so isolated here now; will you come and stay with me at my house, and let me assist you for

a few days until you are rested and able to start? Do, please," said madam entreatingly. She was really in earnest, and she would have added more, but that the expression of her listener's face warned her it was of no use. "You are not without friends and well-wishers. Mr. Satterthwaite also would like to serve you in any way he could."

Helena's face flushed, and a deep frown came on her forehead. It was more the expression of pain than anger, as her friend acknowledged when she heard the tone in which Helena repeated his name.

"Mr. Satterthwaite is very good, but he has nothing to do with me. Jim Devereux and Isi and Cawth and I are going away to-morrow." Then the long eyelashes drooped till they rested on her cheeks, as she turned her head aside so as not to meet the other woman's eyes. And again a hot flush dyed her brow, her cheeks and neck.

“Be it so !” said Mrs. Really to herself ; “I might be only doing the mischief I have been trying to prevent. Jim is her mate after all. If she were with me, Satterthwaite would insist upon seeing her. She has a regard for him ; and there is no telling how things might turn out—it would not be for Helena’s happiness, certainly not for poor Jim’s. And what ought their happiness to be to me ?” thought she, as a wave of bitter envious feeling swept through her. She thought of a scene long years ago, a ball-room, with bare polished floors and long mirrors that reflected the gay uniform coat of a tall hussar, who was holding her hand for the last time and looking at her with sad, despairing eyes. What had the world been to her since ? And now here was this creature with Claud’s own blue eyes looking at her : certainly, if she could help her to what she had herself missed, she would do it. She put up her hand to her brow and pressed it hard, and

something like a tear—was it regret, or was it envy?—dimmed her bright eyes a moment.

“You are right. Tell me now, dear, can I do anything for you? Do you want money? I would lend it you, you know,” she added hurriedly; she feared to offend her.

“I shall have enough when everything is paid,” answered Helena proudly. “Thank you,” she added on meeting the eyes of her new friend.

Mrs. Really pondered a minute with her hand on the door, watching her.

“Helena,” said she impressively, “if you are not happy with Jim it will be your own fault.”

“I know that,” answered the girl quickly, and with a tone that plainly came from her heart; her violet eyes kindled and her cheeks glowed.

Mrs. Really often thought afterwards of the picture the beautiful creature made

as she stood in that hideous sordid room that moment. She stooped forward suddenly, and taking her head in both her hands, kissed her cheeks twice.

“God bless you, my child! be a good wife to him, and obedient always.” Then the door shut, the pony-carriage drove off fast, and Helena wiped a tear off her cheek wonderingly.

It was not her own.

At eight o'clock next morning the funeral cortége left the Mill-house. The coffin was carried on the shoulders of half a dozen men. Isi and Char walked behind it, each holding a corner of the rusty black pall. Isi was sobbing, and Char walked with his dark sullen face turned resolutely to the ground. Behind them came Devereux and Perry, Satterthwaite and the old doctor; Blake, the innkeeper, and Doctor Carton walked in couples. A little crowd of shopkeepers and townsfolk tramped after them. They had not far

to go ; the old graveyard on the other side of the river was almost within stone throw of the Mill-house, and it did not take long to deposit their charge in the family vault. He was the last Darraghmore that would ever lie there. The burial service was read by a clergyman from Ballycor-mack, whom Perry, at Mr. Satterthwaite's instance, had sent for. Satterthwaite it was also who had ordered that the church-bells should be tolled until the ceremony was over. He was disgusted with Perry's indifference and coldness, and had with difficulty refrained from giving him a piece of his mind. The Ferrard boys were too young and ignorant to superintend the arrangements. Their sister of course could not, and Perry, who had been their business-man always, should have seen that a respectable funeral was provided. The lawyer, however, characteristically represented that there was no use going to expense ; everybody knew who and what

Lord Darraghmore was, and "the quieter the thing was got over the better." As to bringing a clergyman from Ballycormack, he pooh-poohed the idea ; it would cost a guinea, maybe two. Satterthwaite qualified Perry in his own mind as an indecent savage, and undertook to bear the cost of the ceremony himself, adding that considering who Lord Darraghmore had been in the parish, it looked ill not to show his remains somewhat of respect.

The funeral over, Satterthwaite followed Blake to the hotel to have breakfast, and the rest dispersed. Char and Isi, with Devereux, returned to the Mill-house. They were to leave that afternoon—Char for London alone, the rest to Queenstown. So, though everything was packed up, there was enough to do before twelve o'clock, at which hour they were to start for the Darraghstown station.

The hall-door was ajar when they reached it. Char pushed in first, and led the way

to the kitchen. Helena was standing at the window reading over a list of figures. She turned round with a slight shiver as they came in.

“ Oh, Jim ! I hadn’t seen you. I didn’t know you had come.”

“ Of course I came,” said he in a low voice. “ What are you doing ? Perry bid me tell you he would be in presently when he had done breakfast. Satterthwaite wouldn’t go to breakfast with him. He has gone up to the hotel.”

“ Oh, Jim !” said Helena, “ I should like to see Satterthwaite again to bid him good-bye and thank him, you know.” She looked wistfully at him as she said this.

“ Yes,” said he ; “ I’d like to shake hands with him too. I think he’s going somewhere ; his gig is at the hotel, and his portmanteau and hat-case are on it. I saw him drive up just as I came here.”

“ Hel,” said Cawth, who had suddenly sat down at the other side of the fire,



“ye must get them their breakfast. Aw’m no able.”

Helena turned round. The old woman looked indeed to be seriously ill. A sudden faintness had taken her ; her cheeks were pale, and her usually bright eyes dim and clouded. She spoke in a feeble voice, very different from her usual harsh tones.

Helena poured out strong tea in the cups—the boys were already eating cold meat and bread—and carried Cawth her breakfast to where she was sitting. She eat nothing, and turned querulously from the plate of food Hel offered her. Grief, and fear of the change and the long voyage before her, had been more than the old woman could bear. Helena was frightened, for Cawth had never been ill in her life ; and she looked at Devereux to call his attention to the change in her nurse’s face. He whispered something to Isi, who went to a press and brought out some

spirits. Then they made her swallow some, and she revived sufficiently to drink her tea.

"Will you be able for the journey, Cawth?" said Devereux anxiously. "Hel," he added, turning to her, "I don't believe she will."

"Yes," said the old woman, looking up suddenly and imploringly into Helena's face. "Eh yes, Hel; ye won't lave me alone now? I'll not trouble ye lang."

"No," said Helena in a kind voice; "I'll not go without you, Cawth." Then they all sat down to table.

"I wonder," said Helena after a time, "where Davy is. I want him to go messages. If Kelly and the baker would come soon I could settle with them. There's a good deal to be done."

"Davy's outside," said Isi. "Shall I tell him to go for them?"

Helena replied in the affirmative, and having finished her own meagre breakfast,

went with the boys into the parlour. Devereux remained with Cawth.

It was not long before the creditors arrived, and were paid in full of all their demands, to their surprise; for though a rumour had gone abroad of the young lady's intention to do so, they never expected to get more than an instalment on account. That done, Helena, after a consultation with Devereux, sent Davy to the hotel to ask Mr. Satterthwaite to come and speak to her. He had scarcely been despatched when Perry walked in. He grinned when he caught sight of the young farmer, and laying his hat on the table sat down and stared at Helena. Devereux walked out of the room, and Isi ran upstairs to Char.

"Well, miss, so you're leaving us for good and all—hey?" said the attorney.

"I am going away to-day, Mr. Perry," replied she gravely. "I should like to settle your account, if you please, and I

am greatly obliged to you for your kindness and attention."

This speech, an unusually long one for the laconic Helena, took Mr. Perry rather unawares, and he turned his eyes aside as if the gaze of Helena's disconcerted him.

"Never mind that, me dear child," he mumbled; "neighbours are neighbours, ye know, and——"

Whether, owing to the working of Mr. Perry's long-disused conscience, or that the sight of Helena, pale and worn-looking, sitting there in her heavy black dress moved him, cannot be determined; but he did feel an unwonted sensation of pity. He turned a little to one side, and dipping into his pocket produced a folded blue paper.

"That's it—yes," said the lawyer, recovering himself as soon as he got to business. Then he opened the paper with a flourish and began to read:

"'Helena Ferrard to '—hum—'debtor'—"

This is the—the funeral this morning, you know, and etceteras—nine pounds, two pounds two—it comes to eleven pounds two.”

Perry had purposely overcharged two pounds. He intended to return Helena these two, for to do him justice he was above cheating her, now at least—and to give himself thus a magnanimous air at no expense. He credited Helena with being a good woman of business, by which he understood that she knew when she was cheated and could take care of herself, and if opportunity offered cheat too ; and he would have thoroughly relished a last bargain with her—a bargain in which he was to cede his point in a considerate, delicate way without being, at the same time, one farthing out of pocket. So he repeated the total—eleven pounds two—staring hard at Helena to see how she was going to take it.

She said not a word, though the amount

did shock her, and it was a serious deduction from her little store. She only looked at Perry with troubled eyes, and her lips moved slightly and got a little paler as she opened the lid of her desk and began to count out the required number of sovereigns. Had the sum been double, Hel would not have disputed it. Perry, who had never been able to calculate on this reception of his manœuvre, sat dumb-founded, and stared when Helena, having counted the sum, laid the sovereigns in a heap on top of his account, and dipping her pen in the ink, gave it him to sign. He took the pen from her mechanically. Then some other idea came into his head. His face turned suddenly very red, and he affected to find fault with the nib of the pen. He looked once more at Helena, who was waiting to see him receipt the bill. A sad white face it was that met his eyes. Perry muttered something that had a very profane sound, scribbled a horribly

blotted signature, then, crumpling up money and bill, jumped up, and stuffed the whole into Helena's hands.

"Keep it, me dear—keep it from me. It'll buy you black things. Good-bye, now. Don't say anything : I'm in a hurry."

The hall-door banged before Helena had realised what he had done. She ran out to Jim, and told him Perry's extraordinary conduct.

"Ought I to send it back to the house?"

She ended her narrative with this question.

Jim laughed.

"Don't," said he ; "he meant it kindly, and anyhow it will be 'before him in the next world.' Certainly I never thought it of Perry."

Neither did Helena, and this, to her, unaccountable development of character afforded her food for meditation until she was again summoned to the parlour, this time to see Satterthwaite.

It might have been his unusual dress—for Satterthwaite always wore some light-coloured suit—a black frock-coat and tall hat, that made him look so pale and gloomy, but even Helena, who was naturally unobservant, noticed his altered looks. He shook hands with her and Devereux. The boys were upstairs finishing their preparations.

Helena spoke first :

“ I wanted to see you, to thank you and bid you good-bye. We,” with a glance towards Devereux, and a quick fleeting blush, “ are going away now.”

“ So I am told,” replied Satterthwaite. “ I wanted to ask your permission to accompany you as far as Cork. Pray don’t refuse me, Miss Ferrard—I am bent upon this.”

“ It is really kind of you, sir,” said Devereux in a moved tone, “ to take so much trouble on yourself. I assure you we are grateful to you.”

Helena cast a surprised look at him, but did not speak.



“ You go by the —— ship, do you not ? I know that line : the boats are excellent, and very comfortable. You meet the Cork mail at the junction there to-day. You have not very much time.”

Satterthwaite spoke in a voice which he endeavoured to render as cheerful as possible.

“ Oh, we are ready,” said Jim ; “ the trunks are in the hall since last night, and the cart will be here directly for them. Then they’ll go over in the mail-cart. I am going to ride by myself.”

“ I can give you a seat in my dog-cart. The man can come over to the train for it. Do take it,” said Satterthwaite.

Jim had no time to answer. The door opened with a crash, and in rushed the Misses Perry, and fell upon Helena with tearful embraces, protesting their sorrow and desolation at the prospect of losing her, and upbraiding her in unmeasured terms for keeping her projects a secret. Satter-

thwaite and Jim made their escape unnoticed in the excitement, and ungenerously left Helena to cope with them unsupported.

“I’ll be at the station before you, till then—”

Satterthwaite hastened away in terror lest the Perrys should sally out and fall upon him. Then the cart came to take away the baggage, which lay ready in the hall. It was all carried out and loaded. Devereux wanted to see Helena to tell her he was going. His effects were at the station already; they had been conveyed there by a trusty man the previous night; but the Perrys, who were embracing her by turns, and literally revelling in demonstrative grief, were not to be got rid of.

At last the red mail-cart, with Thady Conlon, drew up to the door. Helena disengaged herself, and ran out to take her hat and shawls, and help Cawthout. The boys came down ready dressed for the road,

each heavily loaded, and exclaiming loudly against Dirty Davy, who had long ago walked across to the station with the avowed affectionate intention of seeing the last of his masters, and at the same time getting out of the way of any extra labour which the exigencies of moving heavy baggage might entail.

Thady Conlon, with laudable foresight, had allowed himself nearly half an hour as margin against possible delays or accidents, and having got the hall-door open, and a stir created inside the house, assembled a little throng of lookers-on, and proceeded deliberately to enjoy the excitement. A grocer's wife, one of Cawth's chief cronies, crossed the road, carrying a parcel in her hand, and walked into the Mill-house unchallenged. She was to lock the house and keep the key for the landlord, and was in no danger of forgetting her task. She went straight into the kitchen, where Helena was tying on her hat.

“ Oh ! Mrs. McGonigle—sarvice, miss ;” she saw Helena, and dropped a reverential curtsy—“ ’tis come to this wid us, is it ? I made bowld to bring you a small present ; it might be useful one day.” She handed Cawth her parcel as she spoke. This plainly consisted of whiskey and tea, which Cawth, having verified by an experimental squeeze, tucked under her arm approvingly. “ Oh miss, jewel, if you’d happen to meet my boy out in those parts, if you’d only let me know. Mrs. McGonigle, you never seen my Larry ; but sure you’d know him out of me.”

“ Ay, ay !” croaked Cawth ; “ the keys are all in the dures, an’ mind Davy dis nat get in to sleep till she comes. Div ye hear me ?” she added, for Mrs. Carmody, between real and imaginary grief, was weeping noisily. They picked up their parcels, and went into the hall. Isi and Char had piled all the small packages on the car, and stood in the front scowling

at the sympathising mob without the railing. The Perrys dashed out, and stood on the pavement in sight of every one, and in the way of the travellers.

“Curse it I” growled Char. “Here, get up, Hel, do I”

He pushed and lifted the old woman into her seat; then went sulkily round and took his own.

Hel, stunned with the noise and longing to be away, was turning to mount into hers, when Mrs. Perry, her cap-strings flying, appeared at her own hall-door. She had merely put out her head to see them go, but discovering the scene that was going on, she realised suddenly the amount of excitement she was losing, and forthwith, beginning to weep sympathetically, scuttled down the pavement.

“Wait, Thady,” ordered one of the Perrys; “here’s mamma.”

“Oh! good-bye, good-bye, darling child! good-bye! Oh! won’t you write us a

line?" sobbed Mrs. Perry, embracing poor Helena, who was almost unable to answer, so bewildered was she. "No? to me, Hel! won't you write to me?" cried her daughter. "'Twas me you always liked best. Ah, Hel, do! Only one bit of a note!" pleaded the girls in chorus, as Isi, thoroughly out of temper, lifted his sister bodily up beside Cawth, who, sick and feeble as she was, was relishing the whole scene thoroughly.

"Go on, damn you!" Char roared to the driver, who he saw was prolonging the scene.

Thady unwillingly cracked his whip, and amid a tornado of blessings and lamentations the mail-cart at last started. A number of people ran after it, sending messages and recommendations to relations "out there"—all wishing the travellers God speed!

Even Doctor Cartan, forgetting how often Char had cheated him at billiards,

ran up alongside and shook hands with him. Perry watched the whole scene with a grim smile from his own hall-door. Then he came down as he saw the car drive off to rally his wife and daughters on their exquisite sensibility after his own peculiar fashion.

“My stars! Mrs. P., who’s dead? Gad! I thought you had a telegram from O’Malooney Castle at the very least. Julia, yes, I hope Hel will write to you. Have you forgotten the day she made you see stars for giving her impudence? Go in out of this, and don’t be making me sick with your foolery. Crying, indeed; much else you ever did for her!”

Then Mr. Perry recollected how very much more he had done for the Ferrards, and stepped into the bank to regale the manager and Doctors Cartan and Bruton and the clerks with the history of his own generosity in the morning. He had no doubt it would astonish them as much as

it did himself. But it is only right to say, in justice to the characters of the worthy lawyer and his listeners, that the recital only provoked a unanimous burst of derisive incredulity.

The mail-car drove off, hurrying to make up for lost time, along the straight high-road, and the town was soon left behind. Helena, now they were well out of sight, put back her thick crape veil, and drew a deep breath of thankfulness. The boys were silent, and Cawth seemed to be dozing. Thady, the irrepressible, kept up a monologue of talk, chiefly accounts of the wonderful fortunes made in America by his own relations, which were good-naturedly meant to encourage the travellers.

“Now, miss,” said he, “when we get to the top of this hill, look back, and you’ll get the last sight of owld Darraghstown, and that’ll be Comerford Bridge and your own house.”

Helena did as she was desired, and she



could see, as he said, the bridge, and beside it the end wall of the Mill-house. One window of the top room, which had been hers, was visible. It was open, as she had negligently left it, and the blind had been carried out and was flapping in the wind. Then the car turned the bend of the slope and descended the hill, and Hel had seen the last of Darraghmore for ever.

At the station Satterthwaite and Jim were in waiting. Devereux lifted Helena down, and leaning on his strong arm she ascended the steps to the platform. Satterthwaite had arrived the first, and made use of his precedence to buy first-class tickets for the whole party.

Their train came up almost immediately, and taking their places they found themselves, without much delay, on the first stage of their long journey. They had an hour to wait at the junction for the American mail. Here they parted with Char. His

luggage was extracted from the van, and after a hurried farewell—for the Dublin mail only waited for the branch train to arrive and deliver passengers and mails—the youth parted from them on his journey to Vienna. Cawth cried bitterly, and so did Helena, but Isi did not attempt to look upon it otherwise than as an unmixed deliverance. The hour of waiting was spent dully enough. The two women went into the dirty cheerless waiting-room, and the men sauntered up and down smoking. At last the mail arrived. They bestowed themselves nearly all in different carriages, for the train was crowded ; and until Cork was reached they were pretty well left to their several meditations.

Once there, however, there was plenty to do as well as think of. Satterthwaite found some large packages waiting for him at the terminus of the Passage railway.

“ Why, one would think you were

coming with us," said Devereux with a puzzled look, which intensified when he saw his friend pull off the labels and affix his (Devereux's) name to them instead.

"These are some things you may find useful on your journey. I got them for you and Hel"—he checked himself—"Miss Ferrard."

"You have been too good to us, indeed you have, Mr. Satterthwaite. I never could thank you—never!"

Then they found themselves with the rest of the American passengers in the railway for Queenstown. They had a compartment to themselves, and Satterthwaite contrived to place himself next Helena. She was looking out of the window at the river, and thinking of that grey morning she had sailed down there by herself last September. What an age it seemed since! And then she thought of her aunts in Bath, and determined to write, as she had promised, and tell them

how she and her husband got on. Helena turned her head then with a flickering smile and blush to look at Jim, who was talking with Isi at the other end of the carriage ; her eyes met those of Satterthwaite, fixed with an expression at once sad and kind upon her face. His hand rested on the partition between the seats. Helena suddenly took it in both hers and held it.

Ah, Mr. Satterthwaite," said she in an earnest, low voice, "how good you have been to us! Never—never was anybody so——"

Helena's face was very close to his, and she suddenly let go his hand and stopped speaking.

"Helena," said he in a hoarse, broken voice, "if you would have let me be good to you—if you would have been my wife, I wanted to——"

But he never finished—she started violently, and with an involuntarily and

almost angry glance to the other end of the carriage, put her hand suddenly on his mouth.

Satterthwaite seized and pressed it passionately to his lips, then he threw himself back in his seat so that he could not see her even, and lay motionless and silent till they reached the tender. Having collected everything of theirs, and obtained permission to accompany them to the steamer, which was lying farther out in deep water with her steam up waiting for them, Satterthwaite took his seat on one of their packing-cases, and with a brave effort talked cheerfully to Devereux. But his eyes would wander to Helena, who was crouched on a bench beside her nurse. It was cold, and he noticed her shivering, for she had not thought of providing herself with wraps.

“Open the small case when you get on board,” he said at last to Devereux; “you’ll find a travelling-rug and shawl for her in

it ;” then turned away biting his lips hard, and asking himself with a bitter envious feeling, would these two men take care of her and comfort her as he thought he would have done ?

They were in the blue water now, and, as Satterthwaite saw with a pain that grew every moment keener, fast nearing the huge ocean steamer. The passengers who had gone on board at Liverpool were collected on the deck-rail next the tender, watching eagerly for new-comers and newspapers to enliven their already monotonous existence. The tender swung to, ropes were thrown out, and the party climbed up the ladder and on to the great ship. The mails were being passed in speedily, and Satterthwaite had now but a few minutes. It was almost impossible to hear a word. The steam of both vessels was escaping, that of the tender with a hideous half-strangled whistle. The multifarious steamboat smell—dinner, bilge-

water, oil, and close air—poured out of an open door beside them.

Then a bell rang. The mails were all in, and the floor began to throb significantly under their feet. Helena's eyes, running over with tears, were fixed on Satterthwaite's. A woman was weeping aloud near them, parting from a husband.

"Good-bye !" said the Englishman, wringing Isi's brown hand ; "stand by your sister, my boy."

"She won't want him to," said Devereux, holding out his, and looking straight into the other man's eyes.

"I believe you," said Satterthwaite, giving him his right hand, and with the left taking Helena's.

"Good-bye !" he said.

The man who was taking leave of his wife beside them had lifted her down to the deck of the tender and returned. The gangway was in the hands of two sailors, who were watching the captain on the

bridge for orders ; he indeed was giving them fast enough.

“ Shore ! shore ! ” he was shouting, with his red angry face bent on the little group.

“ Go, sir, go ! ” cried Isi, pushing him.

Satterthwaite had both her hands in his, and was looking his last at Hel. She said not a word, but he could feel the hands he held in his tremble and burn.

“ Let go ! ” screeched the captain. “ By the heavens I’ll take him ! ”

The sailors did let go, and the gangway was being pulled in. Satterthwaite cared not : he had lifted Helena in his arms, and was straining her to him in one firm embrace.

“ You won’t grudge me that,” he said as he placed her in Devereux’s arms. Then he laid a hand on the edge of the taffrail, and was standing on it, measuring with his eye the gulf of foaming green water that lay between.

“ Catch him ! stop him ! ho-o-o-ld him ! ”



came from the dancing maniac on the bridge in a prolonged howl. "He'll be drowned. No," in a disappointed *sotto voce* tone, "he's safe; this is always the way. Mr. Chizzle, full steam on! and, God bless my eternal soul, how's her head?"

"I wonder I am not indeed," said Satterthwaite, shaking his feet, which were stinging from the concussion on the deck of the tender, and looking at the width of the boiling chasm that now separated him from the great vessel. "If I were I don't think I'd care."

Then he caught the eye of the captain, who, now restored to good humour, showed a set of white teeth at him, and he went down to the stern of the tender to try and get a last glimpse of Hel's sweet pale face.

Neither she nor Devereux nor the boy appeared, and after a while he felt glad it was so. Little by little the great ship diminished. He could see, following her course with dim sad eyes, the long

white furrow that stretched in her wake rising and falling with the Atlantic rollers. The cloud of black smoke was driven southwards, and floated like a dark shadow above the laughing crests of the waves ; but in a few minutes the tug swept again into the harbour, and Satterthwaite with a sigh bid adieu to even that consolation.

One week after the departure of Lord Darraghmore's family, Mrs. Really met the groom belonging to Mr. Satterthwaite of Rosslyne. The man was mounted on Devereux's cob, Freney, and led his master's own riding horse, Black Auster, who, wrapped in blankets, and with bandaged knees and hocks, had the air of being out of sorts, or going to travel. Such an occurrence could not fail to attract her attention.

" Mr. Satterthwaite's man, eh ?" said she.  
" Is not that Devereux's horse ?"

"Was, 'm; master bought him last week, 'm."

Mrs. Really remained so long silent that the man, touching his hat, was about to ride on, but she stopped him with a sign; then, first clearing her voice, she asked:

"That is your master's own horse, eh?"

"Yes, 'm; I'm taking him to Cork. 'Ee's going to London to master."

"Good-day." But, as she was driving off, a sudden thought struck her, and she pulled up again. "Er—when is your master coming back?"

"We don't expect 'im back, 'm. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Satterthwaite, master's cousins, are coming over with their family for the summer, or till master decides to come himself, and has 'ee's going to Russia with Mr. Carew's family, we don't know when that'll be."

THE END.







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